THE

YOUNG DUKE.

"A moral tale, though gay."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BOOK THE THIRD.



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CHAP. I.

WHETHER or no the progress of invention be accelerated by consulting the comforts of the body as well as of the mind; whether Bacchus or Ceres are fitting company for the Graces and the Muses; whether, in short, the grape and the grill are as essential to the concoction of a sublime poem, or a taking tale, as the ardour of enthusiasm and the piquancy of wit, is a great question, which has not yet been decided. Blackstone, we all know, wrote with the bottle; but then, law is proverbially a dry

study. Dryden, instead of champagne, took calomel. Sir Walter writes before breakfast: Byron always wrote at night, backed by every meal in the day.

When Charles Diodati excused some indifferent verses to Milton, on the plea that it was Christmas, and he was feasting, the indignant bard sent for answer an ode, which might have inspired him at the same time with better verse and correcter sentiments. Here follows a version of a stanza or two:—

"And why should revelry and wine
Be shunn'd as foes to song divine?
Bacchus loves the power of verse,
Bacchus oft the Nine rehearse;
No. Phœbus self disdains to wear
His berries in his golden hair,
And ivy green with laurel twine;
And oft are seen the sisters nine,
Joining, in mystic dance, along
Aonia's hills, with Bacchus' throng.
In frozen Scythia's barren plains,
What dulness seized on Ovid's strains!

Their sweetness fled to climes alone
To Ceres and Lyæus known.

"What but wine with roses crown'd
Did the Teian lyre resound?
Bacchus, with pleasing frenzy fired,
The high Pindaric song inspired:
Each page is redolent of wine,
When crashing loud the car supine
On Elis' plains disjointed lies,
And soil'd with dust, the courser flies.
Rapt with the God's all-pleasing fire,
The Roman Poet strikes the lyre,
And, in measure sweet, addresses
Chloe fair, with golden tresses;
Or his loved Glycere sings,
Touching light the immortal strings."

Now I do not know what your opinion is, but I call this very pretty poetry. In my mind, it is a version not unworthy of Gray. Whose is it then?

Last night, being, as single gentlemen occasionally are, a little moody, I unpacked a case, the contents of which bear the too dignified

title of a library. And here let me advise my friends to follow my example, and give up reading. All my books are print-books. There is no longer any possibility of concealing the mortifying truth, that no book has yet been written which does not weary, and as this cannot be the fault of the writers, it is clear that there is some radical blunder in this mode of conveying our ideas. Now, gazing on a print, a result is conveyed at once, without the slightest labour of mind, and immortal reverie never degenerates into mortal thought. The Iliad and the Odyssey of Flaxman excite in my mind ideas infinitely more vivid than the Iliad and Odyssey by Homer. A Salvator, a Gaspar Poussin, and a Piranesi, are each a stanza of Childe Harold. And I would sooner turn over the pages of Callot, even than the pages of Shakspeare and Voltaire.

No man should read after nineteen. From thirteen to nineteen, hold your tongue, and read every thing you can lay your hands on. In

this period, you may gain some acquaintance with every desirable species of written knowledge. From nineteen to twenty-two, action, action, action. Do every thing, dare every thing, imagine every thing. Fight, write love, spout, travel, talk, feast, dress, drink. I limit you to three years, because I think that in that period a lively lad may share every passion, and because, if he do, at the end of that period he will infallibly be done up.

Then to your solitude, and *meditate on youth.* In these words is the essence of all human wisdom. By five-and-twenty, my pupil may know all that man can attain, both of himself and his fellow-creatures. If our young gentleman live, he may chance to turn out something amusing to himself and to the world. If he die, he dies with the consolation that he has fathomed the mystery of mankind.

But to our tale; or rather to our episode. — My volumes, which are clothed in a style and substance which would raise a flash of enthu-

siasm even from the perfect and practised eye of Dibdin, were guarded from the wear and tear of travel by that most useful and universally-known matter yclept waste paper.

It was printed—I have a horror of waste paper under such circumstances. It may be, (one does not know how,) that some confounded indiscretion, (one cannot tell what,) which we have quite forgotten, (some people remember every thing,) and though, I am sure, for my part, I have no recollection, and hope to God nobody else has, yet still we have all been young, and every thing, at some time or other, will turn up. Oh! the luck of the rogue who falls to the pastry-cook, and not to the trunk-maker!

I have a horror of this waste and woe-begone—this outlawed, wandering, Cain-like material, which all men despise, and which none can do without; which, like the Greek, the Armenian, the Hebrew, and the Gypsy, all think they may burn, and tear, and scorn, and banish. I

have a perfect horror of it! Even my portmanteaus are lined with pink-satin note paper.

'However, on the present occasion, I could not withstand the lure of looking at a page or so, and then I recovered. It turned out to be a translation of the Latin and Italian poems of Milton; a translation so extremely pleasing, that I continued my researches, and even nearly made up a complete copy. Also, like a second Mai, I recovered great part of a translation of Claudian, by the same hand, and which I even prefer to the Milton. Seldom have I met with a version which more completely conveyed the spirit, as well as the sense, of an original, and which did fuller justice to a most ardent and picturesque poet. For instance, how fine is this squadron in complete armour, in Rufinus!

> "One would have thought, that polished statues, dug
> From beds of solid ore, had fiercely breathed,
> And started into action."

These translations purport to be the production of a gentleman bearing the name of

"*J. G. Strutt*," a name, I regret to say, I never before heard, nor, in all probability, did any one else. A somewhat plaintive preface seems to anticipate that the Prefacer was working to pack up my books. Yet these versions are works which probably have demanded many an hour of nightly meditation — perhaps have yielded to their creator some moments of poetic rapture. Such are the "calamities of Authors!"

Very gratified should I be, if this notice, in my transitory page, should attract the public attention to the far more important labours of this ingenious man, who has displayed great taste, and great talent, in a department of literature at the present day too much neglected, and from which neglect, in my opinion, the public mind has suffered.

And, indeed, unless we moderns quickly mend, — the sooner we recur to the clear and creative spirits of antiquity, the better chance has the memory of the Beautiful still to linger

in a world which should have been its temple, and not its tomb! It is difficult to fix on a more mournful study than the contemplation of the literary efforts of mankind during the last fifteen dark centuries, and particularly since the fatal invention of Printing. What fits and starts! —what desperate plunging!—what final bolting! If Man have chanced, for a small quarter of a century, to exhibit anything like a sequence of intellect, what raising of eyes!—what clapping of hands!—what wonderment!—what self-congratulation!—what chatter about illustrious ages!—what tattle about celebrated times! The age of Augustus! The age of Leo! The age of Louis! The age of Anne! Give me the age of human nature. If our political and moral systems had been anything better than bloody blunders, and unsocial compacts, we should have had no cycles of intellect to puzzle a degenerate posterity, and the natural light of the human mind would never have been clouded by the cimmerian

darkness of barbaric conquerors and feudal tyrants, Catholic inquisitors and Protestant puritans.

Then, perhaps, Portugal might have boasted of more than one poet, and Germany might even have owned a classic. Then, Romance might have erected a delightful Moorish palace in the plains of Grenada, and Italy might not then have gazed upon her paintings with a tear, and on her poesy with a blush. France, too, who has a literature, might then have been honoured, instead of being insulted; and England, that miraculous England, of whom I dare not whisper a disparagement, although a Calmuck man-of-war, at anchor in sight, reminds me with disgust, that even in the Mediterranean I might find safety from her vengeance; even England, I say, might then have boasted of an historian rather earlier than the last half-century.

Yet there are some great names. There is Shakspeare, of whom our great-grandfathers

never heard, but whom we have discovered to be a god that was passed over; because we have learnt to misquote some forty of his common-places, which are so true, that we have mistaken them for revelation. What is this Shakspeare but an Orson, who wandering in his woods, and stumbling on Dame Nature a-Maying, has ravished the mighty mother, and mistaken the agony of his mistress for rapture? Then there is Dante, who, on this side of the Alps, shares with the Virgin Mary all the adoration. I do not know how it is, but Dante always reminds me of some antique statue of a Dacian monarch. There is a sad dignity, a grim majesty about him; but then, after all, he is a barbarian. He is a giant, to be sure; but then he is a Cyclops. Then there is Milton, who has favoured us with a puritanic view of the celestial regions—rather different, certainly, from the Pagan. He has assuredly succeeded in his character of Satan; but then he was secretary to Cromwell, and with such opportunities, could

he fail? He has some delightful passages—this Milton,—but I would sooner hear their originals in the choruses of the City of the Violet Crown! Oh! this imitation! Is this the fruit of our classic studies? Are we never to emulate instead of imitate? Are we never to direct the means of the ancients to a modern end? There is Gray, for instance. I would sooner listen to a nightingale on the banks of the Ilyssus than to the lyre of Gray! His poems always remind me of a picture dug up at Pompeii—of a Muse in mosaic. Yet we are not utterly destitute. There is one Englishman—Pope; and there are La Fontaine and Le Sage, and Molicre and Voltaire, natives of that consummate France, whose literature we affect to despise. There is—

"Hold your tongue, Le Drole! and fasten this buckle."

The judicious reader will long ago have perceived, that these latter observations are by my valet, an ingenious Gaul. I vow to Hea-

ven, I shall be annoyed, if they be mistaken for mine.

And now, having discharged my conscience towards Mr. Strutt, in consideration that I am about to begin a new book, and in unison with the exhortation of the illustrious and unrivalled Milton, I intend to get tipsy.

CHAPTER II.

THE day after the arrival of the Duke of St. James at Cleve Park, his host, Sir Lucius Grafton, received the following note from Mrs. Dallington Vere.

"Castle Dacre, ——, 182—

"MY DEAR BARONET,

"YOUR pigeon has flown, otherwise I should have tied this under his wing, for I take it for granted, he is trained too dexterously to alight anywhere but at Cleve.

"Lucy! I confess that, in this affair, your penetration has exceeded mine. I hope throughout it will serve you as well. I kept my pro-

mise, and arrived here only a few hours after him. The prejudice which I had long observed in the little Dacre towards your *protegé* was too marked to render any interference on my part at once necessary, nor did I anticipate even beginning to *give her good advice* for a month to come. Heaven knows, what a month of his conduct might have done! A month achieves such wonders! And, to do him justice, he was most agreeable; but our young gentleman grew impetuous, and so, the day before yesterday he vanished, and in the most extraordinary manner! Sudden departure,—unexpected business;—letter and servants both left behind; Monsieur grave, and a little astonished; and the Demoiselle thoughtful at the least, but not curious. Very suspicious this last circumstance! A flash crossed my mind, but I could gain nothing, even with my most dexterous wiles, from the little Dacre, who is a most unmanageable heroine. However, with the good assistance of a person who in a French

tragedy would figure as my confidante, and who is the sister of your Lachen, — I am sure I need say no more — (Let it suffice, she is not unworthy of her mistress.) something was learnt from Monsieur le Valet, to say nothing of the pages. All agree; a countenance pale as death, orders given in a low voice of suppressed passion, and sundry oaths. I hear he sulked the night at Rosemount.

"Now, my dear Lucy, listen to me. Lose no time about the *great object*. If possible, let this autumn *be distinguished*. You have an idea that our friend is a very manageable sort of personage, in phrase less courteous, is sufficiently weak for all reasonable purposes. I am not quite so clear about this. He is at present very young, and his character is not formed; but there is a something about him which makes me half fear, that if you permit his knowledge of life to increase too much, you may quite fear having neglected my admonitions. At present, his passions are high. Use his

blood while it is hot, and remember, that if you count on his rashness, you may, as nearly in the present instance, yourself rue it. In a word, *dispatch.* The deed that is done, you know—

"My kindest remembrances to dear Lady Afy, and tell her how much I regret I cannot avail myself of her most friendly invitation. Considering, as I know, she hates me, I really do feel flattered. Give her a kiss for me, Lucy.

"You cannot conceive what Vandals I am at present among! Nothing but my sincere regard for you, my much valued friend, would induce me to stay here a moment. I have received from the countenance of the Dacres all the benefit which a marked connection with so respectable and so moral a family confers, and I am tired to death. But it is a well-devised plan to have a reserve in the battles of society. You understand me; and I am led to believe that it has had the best effect, and silenced

even the loudest. 'Confound their politics!' as dear little Squib says, from whom I had the other day the funniest letter, which I have half a mind to send you, only you figure in it so much!

"Burlington is at Brighton, and all my friends, except yourself. I have a few barbarians to receive at Dallington, and then I shall be off there. Join us as quickly as you can. Do you know, I think that it would be an excellent *locale* for the *scena*. We might drive them over to Dieppe: — only do not put off your visit too long, or else there will be no steamers.

"The Duke of Shropshire has had a fit, but rallied. He vows he was only picking up a letter, or tying his shoe-string, or something of that kind; but, Ruthven says, he dined off *Boudins à la Sefton*, and that, after a certain age, you know—

"Lord Darrell is with Annesley and Co. I understand, most friendly towards me, which is

pleasant; and Charles, who is my firm ally, takes care to confirm the kind feeling. I am glad about this.

"Felix Crawlegh, or Craw*ley*, as some say, has had an affair with Tommy Seymour, at Grant's. Felix was grand about porter, or something, which he never drank, and all that. Tommy, who knew nothing about the brewing father, asked him, very innocently, why malt liquors had so degenerated. Conceive the agony, particularly as Lady Selina is said to have no violent aversion to quartering her arms with a mash-tub, *argent.*

"The Macaronis are most hospitable this year; and the Marquis says, that the only reason that they kept in before was, because he was determined to see whether economy was practicable. He finds it is not—so, now, expense is no object.

"Augustus Henley is about to become a senator! What do you think of this? He says, he has tried every thing for an honest liveli-

hood, and even once began a novel, but could not get on; which, Squib says, is odd, because there is a receipt going about for that operation, which saves all trouble.

"'Take a pair of pistols and a pack of cards, a cookery-book, and a set of new quadrilles; mix them up with half an intrigue and a whole marriage, and divide them into three equal portions.' Now, as Augustus has both fought and gamed, dined and danced, I suppose it was the morality which posed him, or, perhaps, the marriage. Talking of books, I have been rather amused by Fribble's little indiscretion, 'The Season;' but it is not true, that the first volume was written by Gunter, the second by Stultz, and the third by Cuffe.

"They say there is something about Lady Flutter, but, I should think, all talk. Most probably, a report set about by her Ladyship. Lord Flame has been blackballed, that is certain. But there is no more news, except that the Wiltshires are going to the Continent—we know

why; and that the Spankers are making more dash than ever — God knows how! Adieu!

"B. D. V."

The letter ended: all things end at last. A she-correspondent for my money — provided always that she does not *cross*.

Our Duke — in spite of his disgrace, he still is ours, and yours too, I hope, gentlest reader, — our Duke found himself at Cleve Park again, in a different circle to the one to which he had been chiefly accustomed. The sporting world received him with open arms. With some of these worthies, as owner of *Sanspareil*, he had become slightly acquainted. But what is half a morning at Tattersall's, or half a week at Doncaster, compared with a meeting at Newmarket? There, your congenial spirits congregate, Freemasons every man of them! No uninitiated wretch there dares to disturb, with his profane presence, the hallowed mysteries. There, the race is not a peg to hang a few

days of dissipation on, but a sacred ceremony, to the celebration of which, all men and all circumstances tend and bend. No balls, no concerts, no public breakfasts, no bands from Litolf, no singers from Welsh, no pine-apples from Gunter, are there called for by thoughtless thousands, who have met, not from any affection for the turf's delights or their neighbour's cash, but to sport their splendid liveries, and to disport their showy selves.

The house was full of men, whose talk was full of bets. The women were not as bad, but they were not plentiful. Some Lords and Signors were there without their dames. Lord Bloomerly, for instance, alone, or rather, with his eldest son, Lord Bloom, just of age, and already a knowing hand. His father introduced him to all his friends, with that smiling air of self-content, which men assume when they introduce a youth, who may show the world what they were at his years: so the Earl presented the young Viscount, as a lover presents

his miniature to his mistress. Lady Afy shone in unapproached perfection. A dull Marchioness, a *gauche* Viscountess, and some other dames, who did not look like the chorus of this Diana, acted as capital foils, and permitted her to meet her cavalier under, what are called, the most favourable auspices.

They dined, and discussed the agricultural interest in all its exhausted ramifications. Corn was sold over again, even at a higher price; poachers were recalled to life, or from beyond seas, to be re-killed, or re-transported. The poor-laws were a very rich topic, and the poor lands, a very ruinous one. But all this was merely the light conversation, just to vary, in an agreeable mode, which all could understand, the regular material of discourse, and that was of stakes and stallions, pedigrees and plates.

Our party rose early, for their pleasure was their business. Here were no lounging dandies, and no exclusive belles, who kept their bowers

until hunger, which also drives down wolves from the Pyrenees, brought them from their mystical chambers, to luncheon and to life. In short, an air of interest, a serious and a thoughtful look, pervaded every countenance. Fashion was kicked to the devil, and they were all too much in earnest to have any time for affectation.

Breakfast was over, and it was a regular meal at which all attended, and they hurried to the course. It seems, when the party arrive, that they are the only spectators. A party or two come on to keep them company. A club discharges a crowd of gentlemen, a stable, a crowd of grooms. At length, a sprinkling of human beings is collected, but all is wondrous still, and wondrous cold. The only thing that gives sign of life, is Lord Breedall's moveable stand; and the only intimation that fire is still an element, is the sailing breath of a stray cigar.

" This, then, is Newmarket!" exclaimed the

young Duke. "If it required five-and-twenty thousand pounds to make Doncaster amusing, a plumb, at least, will go in rendering Newmarket endurable."

But the young Duke was wrong. There was a fine race, and the connoisseurs got enthusiastic. Sir Lucius Grafton was the winner. The Duke sympathized with his friend's success.

He began galloping about the course, and his blood warmed. He paid a visit to *Sans-pareil*. He heard his steed was still a favourite for a coming cup. He backed his steed, and *Sanspariel* won. He began to find Newmarket not so disagreeable. In a word, our friend was in an entirely new scene, which was exactly the thing he required. He was interested, and forgot, or rather, forcibly expelled from his mind, his late overwhelming adventure. He grew popular with the set. His courteous manners, his affable address, his gay humour, and the facility with which he adopted their tone and temper, joined with his rank and

wealth, subdued the most rugged and the coldest hearts. Even the jockeys were civil to him, and welcomed him with a sweet smile and gracious nod, instead of the sour grin, and malicious wink, with which those characters generally greet a stranger—those mysterious characters who, in their influence over their superiors, and their total want of sympathy with their species, are our only match for the Oriental Eunuch.

He grew, I say, popular with the set. They were glad to see among them a young nobleman of spirit. He became a member of the Jockey Club, and talked of taking a villa in the neighbourhood. All recommended the step, and assured him of their readiness to dine with him as often as he pleased. He was an universal favourite; and even Chuck Farthing, the gentleman jockey, with a cock-eye, and a knowing shake of his head, squeaked out, in a sporting treble, one of his monstrous fudges about the Prince in days of yore, and swore that, like his

Royal Highness, the young Duke made the Market all alive.

The heart of our hero was never insensible to flattery. He could not refrain from comparing his present with his recent situation. The constant consideration of all around him, the affectionate cordiality of Sir Lucius, and the constant but unobtrusive devotion of Lady Afy, melted his soul. These agreeable circumstances graciously whispered to him each hour, that he could scarcely be the desolate and despicable personage, which lately, in a moment of madness, he had fancied himself. He began to indulge the satisfactory idea, that a certain person, however unparalleled in form and mind, had perhaps acted with a little precipitation. Then his eyes met those of Lady Aphrodite; and, full of these feelings, he exchanged a look which reminded him of their first meeting; though now mellowed by gratitude, and regard, and esteem, it was perhaps even more delightful. He was loved,—and he was loved by an exquisite

being, who was the object of universal admiration. What could he desire more? Nothing but the wilfulness of youth could have induced him for a moment to contemplate breaking chains, which had only been formed to secure his felicity. He determined to bid farewell for ever to the impetuosity of youth. He had not been three days under the roof of Cleve, before he felt that his happiness depended upon its fairest inmate. You see, then, that absence is not always fatal to love!

CHAPTER III.

His Grace completed his stud, and became one of the most distinguished votaries of the turf. Sir Lucius was the inspiring divinity upon this occasion. Our hero, like all young men, and particularly young nobles, did every thing in extremes; and extensive arrangements were made by himself and his friend for the ensuing campaign. Sir Lucius was to reap half the profit, and to undertake the whole management. The Duke was to produce the capital, and to pocket the whole glory. Thus rolled on six weeks, at the end of which our hero began to get a little tired. He had long ago recovered all his self-complacency, and if the

form of May Dacre ever flitted before his vision for an instant, he clouded it over directly by the apparition of a bet, or thrust it away with that desperate recklessness with which we expel an ungracious thought. The Duke sighed for a little novelty. Christmas was at hand. He began to think that a regular country Christmas must be a sad bore. Lady Afy, too, was rather *exigeante*. It destroys one's nerves to be amiable every day to the same human being. She was the best creature in the world; but Cambridgeshire was not a pleasant county. He was most attached; but there was not another agreeable woman in the house. He would not hurt her feelings for the world; but his own were suffering most desperately. He had no idea that he ever should get so entangled. Brighton, they say, is a pleasant place.

To Brighton he went; and although the Graftons were to follow him in a fortnight, still even these fourteen days were a holiday. It is extraordinary how hourly, and how violently,

change the feelings of an inexperienced young man.

Sir Lucius, however, was disappointed in his Brighton trip. Ten days after the departure of the young Duke, the county member died. Sir Lucius had been long maturing his pretensions to the vacant representation. He was strongly supported; for he was a personal favourite, and his family had claims; but he was violently opposed; for a *novus homo* was ambitious, and the Baronet was poor. Sir Lucius was a man of violent passions, and all feelings and considerations immediately merged in his paramount ambition. His wife, too, at this moment, was an important personage. She was generally popular; she was beautiful, highly connected, and highly considered. Her canvassing was a great object. She canvassed with earnestness, and with success; for since her consolatory friendship with the Duke of St. James, her character had greatly changed, and she was now as desirous of conciliating her

husband and the opinion of society, as she was before disdainful of the one, and fearless of the other. Sir Lucius and Lady Aphrodite Grafton were indeed on the best possible terms, and the whole county admired his conjugal attentions, and her wifelike affections.

The Duke, who had no influence in this part of the world, and who was not at all desirous of quitting Brighton, compensated for his absence at this critical moment by a friendly letter, and the offer of his purse. By this good aid, his wife's attractions, and his own talents, Sir Lucy succeeded, and by the time Parliament had assembled, he was returned member for his native county.

In the mean time, his friend had been spending his time at Brighton, in a far less agitated manner; but, in its way, not less successful; for he was amused, and therefore gained his object as much as the Baronet. The Duke liked Brighton much. Without the bore of an establishment, he found himself among many agree-

able friends, living in an unostentatious and impromptu, though refined and luxurious, style. One day, a new face; another day, a new dish; another day, a new dance, successively interested his feelings, particularly if the face rode, which they all do. The dish was at Sir George Sauceville's, and the dance at the Duke of Burlington's. So time flew on, between a canter to Rottindean, the flavours of a Perigord, and the blunders of the Mazurka.

But February arrived, and this agreeable life must end. The philosophy of society is so practical, that it is not allowed even to a young Duke, absolutely to trifle away existence. Duties will arise, in spite of our best endeavours; and his Grace had to roll up to town, to dine with the Premier, and to move the Address.

CHAPTER IV.

Another season had arrived, — another of those magical periods of which one had already witnessed his unparalleled triumphs, and from which he had derived such exquisite delight. To his surprise, he viewed its arrival without emotion, — if with any feeling, with disgust.

He had quaffed the cup too eagerly. The draught had been delicious; but time also proved that it had been satiating. Was it possible for his vanity to be more completely gratified than it had been? Was it possible for victories to be more numerous and more unquestioned during the coming campaign,

than during the last? Had not his life, then, been one long triumph? Who had not offered their admiration? Who had not paid homage to his all-acknowledged empire? Yet, even this career, however dazzling, had not been pursued; even this success, however brilliant, had not been attained without some effort, and some weariness, also some exhaustion. Often, as he now remembered, had his head ached; more than once, as now occurred to him, had his heart faltered. Even his first season had not passed over without his feeling lone in the crowded saloon, or starting at the supernatural finger in the banqueting-hall. Yet then he was the creature of excitement, who pursued an end, which was as indefinite, as it seemed to be splendid. All had now happened that could happen. He drooped. He required the impulse which we derive from an object unattained.

Yet, had he exhausted life at two-and-twenty? This must not be. His feelings

must be more philosophically accounted for. He began to suspect that he had lived too much for the world, and too little for himself; that he had sacrificed his ease to the applause of thousands, and mistaken excitation for enjoyment. His memory dwelt with satisfaction on the hours which had so agreeably glided away at Brighton, in the choice society of a few intimates. He determined entirely to remodel the system of his life; and with the sanguine impetuosity which characterised him, he, at the same moment, felt that he had at length discovered the road to happiness, and determined to pursue it without the loss of a precious moment.

The Duke of St. James was seen less in the world, and he appeared but seldom at the various entertainments which he had once so adorned. Yet he did not resign his exalted position in the world of Fashion; but, on the contrary, adopted a course of conduct which even increased his consideration. He received the

world not less frequently, or less splendidly, than heretofore; and his magnificent mansion, early in the season, was opened to the favoured crowd. Yet in that mansion, which had been acquired with such energy, and at such cost, its Lord was almost as strange, and certainly not as pleased an inmate, as the guests, who felt their presence in his chambers a confirmation, or a creation of their claims to the world's homage. The Alhambra was finished, and there the Duke of St. James entirely resided: but its regal splendour was concealed from the prying eye of public curiosity, with a proud reserve, a studied secrecy, and stately haughtiness becoming a caliph. A small band of initiated friends alone had the occasional *entrée;* and the mysterious air which they provokingly assumed, whenever they were cross-examined on the internal arrangements of this mystical structure, only increased the number and the wildness of the incidents which daily were afloat, respecting the fantastic profusion and

scientific dissipation of the youthful sultan and his envied viziers.

The town, ever since the season commenced, had been in feverish expectation of the arrival of a new singer, whose fame had heralded her presence in all the courts of Christendom. Whether she were an Italian, or a German, a Gaul, or a Greek, was equally unknown. An air of mystery environed the most celebrated creature in Europe. There were odd whispers of her parentage. Every potentate was, in turn, entitled to the gratitude of mankind for the creation of this marvel. Now, it was an emperor, — now it was a king. A grand-duke then put in his claim; and then an archduke. To-day, she was married — to-morrow, she was single. To-day, her husband was a prince incog.—to-morrow, a drum-major, well-known. Even her name was a mystery; and she was known and worshipped throughout the whole civilized world by the mere title of "The Bird of Paradise!"

About a month before Easter, telegraphs announced her arrival. The Admiralty yacht was too late. She determined to make her first appearance at the Opera; and not only the young Duke, but even a far more exalted personage, was disappointed in the sublime idea of anticipating the public opinion by a private concert. She was to appear, for the first time, on Tuesday:—the House of Commons adjourned.

The curtain is drawn up, and the house is crowded. Every body is there who is any body. Protocoli, looking as full of fate as if the French were again on the Danube; Macaroni, as full of himself as if no other being were engrossing universal attention. The Premier appears far more anxious than he does at Council; and the Duke of Burlington arranges his fan-like screen with an agitation which, for a moment, makes him forget his unrivalled *nonchalance*. Even Lady Bloomerly is in suspense; and even Charles Annesley's heart beats. But, ah! (or rather, bah!) the enthusiasm of Lady de

Courcy! Even the very young Guardsman, who paid her Ladyship for her ivory franks by his idle presence,—even he must have felt, callous as those very young Guardsmen are.

Will that bore of a tenor ever finish that provoking Aria, that we have heard so often? How drawlingly he drags on his dull, deafening——

ÊCCOLA!

Have you seen the primal dew, ere the sun has lipped the pearl? Have you seen a summer fly, with tinted wings of shifting light, glance in the liquid noontide air? Have you marked a shooting star, or watched a young gazelle at play? Then you have seen nothing fresher, nothing brighter, nothing wilder, nothing lighter, than the girl who stands before you!

She was infinitely small, fair, and bright. Her black hair was braided in Madonnas over a brow like ivory; a deep pure pink spot gave lustre to each cheek. Her features were deli-

cate beyond a dream; her nose quite straight, with a nostril which would have made you crazy, if you had not already been struck with idiotism, by gazing on her mouth. She a singer! Impossible! She cannot speak. And now I look again, she must sing with her eyes, they are so large and lustrous!

The Bird of Paradise curtsied, as if she shrunk under the overwhelming greeting, and crossed her breast with arms that gleamed like moonbeams, and hands that glittered like stars. This gave time to the cognoscenti to remark her costume, which was ravishing, and to try to see her feet; but they were too small. At last, Lord Squib announced, that he had discovered them by a new glass, and described them as a couple of diamond-claws most exquisitely finished.

She rolled round her head with a faint smile, as if she distrusted her powers, and feared the assembly would be disappointed, and then she shot forth a note, which thrilled through every

heart, and nearly cracked the chandelier. Even Lady Fitz-pompey said "Brava!"

As she proceeded, the audience grew quite frantic. It was agreed on all hands, that miracles had recommenced. Each air was only sung to call forth fresh exclamations of "Miracolo!" and encores were as unmerciful as an usurper.

Amid all this rapture, the young Duke was not silent. His box was on the stage; and ever and anon, the syren shot a glance which seemed to tell him, that he was marked out amid this brilliant multitude. Each round of applause, each roar of ravished senses, only added a more fearful action to the wild purposes which began to flit about his Grace's mind. His imagination was touched. His old passion to be distinguished returned in full force. This creature was strange, mysterious, celebrated. Her beauty, her accomplishments were as singular and as rare as her destiny and her fame. His reverie absolutely raged: it was only disturbed

by her repeated notice and his returned acknowledgments. He arose in a state of mad excitation,—once more the slave, or the victim, of his intoxicated vanity. He hurried behind the scenes. He congratulated her on her success, her genius, and her beauty; and, to be brief, within a week of her arrival in our metropolis, the Bird of Paradise was fairly caged in the Alhambra.

CHAPTER V.

HITHERTO the Duke of St. James had been a very celebrated personage; but his fame had been confined to the two thousand Brahmins who constitute the World. His patronage of the Signora extended his celebrity in a manner which he had not anticipated; and he became also the hero of the ten, or twelve, or fifteen millions of Parias, for whose existence philosophers have hitherto failed to adduce a satisfactory cause.

The Duke of St. James was now, in the most comprehensive sense of the phrase, a Public Character. Some choice spirits took the hint

from the public feelings, and determined to dine on the public curiosity. A Sunday journal was immediately established. Of this epic, our Duke was the hero. His manners, his sayings, his adventures, regularly regaled, on each holy day, the Protestant population of this Protestant empire, who in France or Italy, or even Germany, faint at the sight of a peasantry testifying their gratitude for a day of rest, by a dance or a tune. "Sketches of the Alhambra," —"*Soupirs* in the Regent's Park,"—"The Court of the Caliph,"—"The Bird-cage," &c. &c. &c. were duly announced, and duly devoured. This journal being solely devoted to the illustration of the life of a single and a private individual, was appropriately entitled "The Universe." Its contributors were eminently successful. Their pure inventions, and impure details, were accepted as the most delicate truth; and their ferocious familiarity with persons with whom they were totally unacquainted, demonstrated, at the same time, their

acquaintance both with the forms, and the personages of polite society.

At the first announcement of this hebdomadal, his Grace was a little annoyed, and "*Noctes Hautevillienses*" made him fear treason; but when he had read a number, he entirely acquitted any person of a breach of confidence. On the whole, he was amused. A variety of ladies, in time, were introduced, with many of whom the Duke had scarcely interchanged a bow; but the respectable editor was not up to Lady Afy.

If his Grace, however, were soon reconciled to this, not very agreeable, notoriety, and consoled himself under the activity of his libellers, by the conviction that their prolusions did not even amount to a caricature, he was less easily satisfied with another perfomance which speedily advanced its claims to public notice.

There is an unavoidable re-action in all human affairs. The Duke of St. James had been so successfully attacked, that it became worth

while successfully to defend him, and another Sunday paper appeared, the object of which was to maintain the silver side of the shield. Here every thing was *couleur de rose.* One week, the Duke saved a poor man from the Serpentine; another, a poor woman from starvation: now an orphan was grateful; and now Miss Zouch, impelled by her necessity, and his reputation, addressed him a column and a half, quite heart-rending. Parents with nine children; nine children without parents; clergymen most improperly unbeneficed; officers most wickedly reduced; widows of younger sons of quality sacrificed to the Colonies; sisters of literary men sacrificed to national works, which required his patronage to appear; daughters who had known better days, but somehow or other had not been as well acquainted with their parents; — all advanced with multiplied petitions, and that hackneyed, heartless air of misery which denotes the Mumper. His Grace was infinitely annoyed, and scarcely compen-

sated for the inconvenience by the prettiest little creature in the world, who one day forced herself into his presence to solicit the honour of dedicating to him her poems.

He had enough upon his hands, so he wrote her a check, and with a courtesy which must have made this Sappho quite desperate, put her out of the room.

I forgot to say, that the name of the new journal was the "New World." The new world is not quite as big as the universe, but then it is as large as all the other quarters of the globe together. The worst of this business was, the Universe protested that the Duke of St. James, like a second Canning, had called this New World into existence, which was too bad, because, in truth, he deprecated its discovery scarcely less than the Venetians.

Having thus managed, in the course of a few weeks, to achieve the reputation of an unrivalled *Roué*, our hero one night betook him-

self to Almack's, a place where his visits, this season, were both shorter and less frequent.

Many an anxious mother gazed upon him, as he passed, with an eye which longed to pierce futurity; many an agitated maiden looked exquisitely unembarrassed, while her fluttering memory feasted on the sweet thought that, at any rate, another had not captured this unrivalled prize. Perhaps she might be the Anson to fall upon this galleon. It was worth a long cruise, and even the chance of a shipwreck.

He danced with Lady Aphrodite, because since the affair of the Signora, he was most punctilious in his attentions to her, particularly in public. That affair, of course, she passed over in silence, though it was bitter. She, however, had had sufficient experience of a man to feel that remonstrance is a last resource, and usually an ineffectual one. It was something that her rival — not that her Ladyship dignified the bird by that title — it was something, that she was not her equal, that she was

not one with whom she could be put in painful and constant collision. She tried to consider it a freak, to believe only half she heard, and to indulge the fancy, that it was a toy which would soon tire. As for Sir Lucius, he saw nothing in this adventure, or indeed in the Alhambra system at all, which militated against his ulterior views. No one more constantly officiated at the ducal orgies than himself, both because he was devoted to self-gratification, and because he liked ever to have his *protegé* in sight. He studiously prevented any other individual from becoming the Petronius of the circle. His deep experience also taught him, that with a person of the young Duke's temper, the mode of life which he was now leading, was exactly the one which not only would insure, but even hurry the catastrophe his faithful friend so eagerly desired. His pleasures, as Sir Lucius knew, would soon pall; for he easily perceived that the Duke was not heartless enough for a *roué*. When thorough satiety is felt,

young men are in the cue for desperate deeds. Looking upon happiness as a dream, or a prize which, in life's lottery, they have missed—worn, hipped, dissatisfied, and desperate, they often hurry on a result which they disapprove, merely to close a miserable career, or to brave the society with which they cannot sympathize.

The Duke, however, was not yet sated. As after a feast, when we have despatched a quantity of wine, there sometimes, as it were, arises a second appetite, unnatural, to be sure, but very keen; so, in a career of dissipation, when our passion for pleasure appears to be exhausted, the fatal fancy of man, like a wearied hare, will take a new turn, throw off the hell-hounds of *ennui*, and course again with renewed vigour.

And to-night the Duke of St. James was, as he had been for some weeks, all life, and fire, and excitement; and his eye was even now wandering round the room, in quest of some consummate spirit, whom he might summon to his Saracenic Paradise.

A consummate spirit his eye lighted on. There stood May Dacre. He gasped for breath. He turned pale. It was only for a moment, and his emotion was unperceived. There she stood, beautiful as when she first glanced before him; —there she stood, with all her imperial graces; and all surrounding splendour seemed to fade away before her dazzling presence, like mournful spirits of a lower world before a radiant creature of the sky.

She was speaking with her sunlight smile to a young man, whose appearance attracted his notice. He was dressed entirely in black, short, but slenderly made; sallow, but clear, with long black curls, and a Murillo face, and looked altogether like a young Jesuit, or a Venetian official by Giorgione or Titian. His countenance was reserved, and his manner not very easy; yet, on the whole, his face indicated intellect, and his figure bloom. The features haunted the Duke's memory. He had met this person before. There are some countenances, which,

when once seen, can never be forgotten, and the young man owned one of these. The Duke recalled him to his memory with a pang.

Our hero,—let him still be ours; for he is rather desolate, and he requires the backing of his friends,—our hero behaved pretty well. He seized the first favourable opportunity to catch Miss Dacre's eye, and was grateful for her bow. Emboldened, he accosted her, and asked after Mr. Dacre. She was very courteous, but amazingly unembarrassed. Her calmness, however, piqued him sufficiently to allow him to rally. He was tolerably easy, and talked of calling. Their conversation lasted only for a few minutes, and was fortunately terminated without his withdrawal, which would have been awkward. The young man, whom we have noticed, came up to claim her hand.

"Arundel Dacre, or my eyes deceive me," said the young Duke. "I always consider an old Etonian a friend, and therefore I address you without ceremony."

The young man accepted, but not with great readiness, the offered hand. He blushed, and spoke, but in a hesitating and husky voice. Then he cleared his throat, and spoke again, but not much more to the purpose. Then he looked to his partner, whose eyes were on the ground, and rose as he endeavoured to catch them. For a moment, he was silent again; then he bowed slightly to Miss Dacre, and solemnly to the Duke, and then he carried off his cousin.

"Poor Dacre!" said the Duke; "he always had the worst manner in the world. Not in the least changed."

His Grace wandered into the tea-room. A knot of dandies were in deep converse. He heard his own name, and that of the Duke of Burlington; then came "Doncaster Beauty"—"Don't you know?"—"Oh! yes,"—"All quite mad," &c. &c. &c. As he passed, he was invited in different ways to join this coterie of his admirers, but he declined the honour, and passed them with that icy hauteur, which he

could assume, and which, judiciously used, contributed not a little to his popularity.

He could not conquer his depression; and although it was scarcely past midnight, he determined to disappear. Fortunately, his carriage was waiting. He was at a loss what to do with himself. He dreaded even to be alone. The Signora was at a private concert, and she was the last person whom, at this moment, he cared to see. His low spirits rapidly increased. He got terribly nervous, and felt perfectly miserable. At last, he drove to White's.

The House had just broke up, and the political members had just entered, and in clusters, some standing, and some yawning, some stretching their arms, and some stretching their legs, presented symptoms of an escape from boredom. Among others, round the fire, was a young man dressed in a rough great coat all cords and sables, with his hat bent aside, a shawl tied round his neck with great boldness, and a huge oaken staff clenched in his left hand. With the

other he held the Courier, and reviewed with a critical eye the report of the speech which he had made that afternoon. This was Lord Darrell.

I have always considered the talents of younger brothers as an unanswerable argument in favour of a Providence. Lord Darrell was the younger son of the Earl of Darleyford, and had been educated for a diplomatist. A report some two years ago had been very current, that his elder brother, then Lord Darrell, was, against the consent of his family, about to be favoured with the hand of Mrs. Dallington Vere. Certain it is, he was a very devoted admirer of that lady. Of that lady, however, a less favoured rival chose one day to say that, which staggered the romance of the impassioned youth. In a moment of rashness, impelled by sacred feelings, it is reported, at least, for the whole is a mystery, he communicated what he had heard with horror to the mistress of his destinies. Whatever took place,

certain it is, Lord Darrell challenged the indecorous speaker and was shot through the heart. The affair made a great sensation, and the Darleyfords and their connections said bitter things of Mrs. Dallington, and talked much of rash youth and subtle woman of discreeter years, and passions shamefully inflamed, and purposes wickedly egged on. I say nothing of all this; nor will we dwell upon it. Mrs. Dallington Vere assuredly was no slight sufferer. But she conquered the cabal that was formed against her, for the dandies were her friends, and gallantly supported her through a trial under which some women would have sunk. As it was, at the end of the season, she did travel, but all is now forgotten; and Hill Street, Berkeley Square, again contains, at the moment of our story, its brightest ornament.

The present Lord Darrell gave up all idea of being an ambassador, but he was clever; and though he hurried to gratify a taste for pleasure which before had been too much mortified,

he could not relinquish the ambitious prospects with which he had, during the greater part of his life, consoled himself for his cadetship. He piqued himself upon being, at the same time, a dandy and a statesman. He spoke in the House, and not without effect. He was one of those who had made himself master of all the great political questions, that is to say, had read a great many reviews and newspapers, and was full of others' thoughts, without ever having thought himself. He particularly prided himself upon having made his way into the Alhambra set. He was the only man of business among them. The Duke liked him,—for it is agreeable to be courted by those who are themselves considered.

Lord Darrell was a great favourite with the women. They like a little intellect. He talked fluently on all subjects. He was what is called "a talented young man," (oh! that odious, canting, un-English word!) Then he had mind, and soul, and all that. The miracles

of creation have long agreed that body without soul will not do, and even a coxcomb in these days must be original, or he is a bore. No longer is such a character the mere creation of his tailor and his perfumer. He must dress, certainly, assuredly, he must scent. But he must also let the world hourly feel by that delicate eccentricity, which infuses a graceful variety into the monotony of life, that he is entitled to invent a button, or to bathe in violets.

Lord Darrell was an avowed admirer of Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and a great favourite with her parents, who both considered him an oracle on the subjects which respectively interested them. You might dine at Fitz-pompey House, and hear his name quoted at both ends of the table; by the host, upon the state of Europe, and by the hostess, upon the state of the season. Had it not been for the young Duke, nothing would have given Lady Fitz-pompey greater pleasure than to have received him as a son-in-law; but, as it was, he was

only kept in store for the second string to Cupid's bow.

Lord Darrell had just quitted the House in a costume which, though rough, was not less studied than the finished and elaborate toilette which, in the course of an hour, he will exhibit in the enchanted halls of Almack's. There he will figure to the last, the most active and the most remarked; and though after these continued exertions, he will not gain his couch perhaps till seven, our Lord of the Treasury,—for he is one,—will resume his official duties at an earlier hour than any functionary in the kingdom.

Yet our friend is a little annoyed now. What is the matter? He dilates to his uncle, Lord Seymour Temple, a greyheaded placeman, on the profligacy of the press. What—what is this? The Virgilian line our orator introduced so felicitously is omitted. He panegyrizes the Mirror of Parliament, where he has no doubt the missing verse will appear. The quotation was new—"*Timeo Danaos.*"

Lord Seymour Temple begins a long story about Fox and General Fitzpatrick. This is a signal for a general retreat; and the bore, as Sir Boyle Roche would say, like the last rose of summer, remains talking to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

Arundel Dacre was the only child of Mr. Dacre's only and deceased brother, and the heir to the whole of the Dacre property. His father, a man of violent passions, had married early in life, against the approbation of his family, and had revolted from the Catholic communion. The elder brother, however mortified by this great deed, which passion had prompted, and not conscience, had exerted his best offices to mollify their exasperated father, and to reconcile the sire to the son. But he had exerted them ineffectually; and, as is not unusual, found, after much harrowing anxiety and deep suffering, that he was not even recom-

pensed for his exertions and his sympathy, by the gratitude of his brother. The younger Dacre was not one of those minds whose rashness and impetuosity are counterbalanced, or rather compensated, by a generous candour and an amiable remorse. He was headstrong, but he was obstinate: he was ardent, but he was sullen: he was unwary, but he was suspicious. Every one who opposed him was his enemy: all who combined for his preservation were conspirators. His father, whose feelings he had outraged, and never attempted to soothe, was a tyrant; his brother, who was devoted to his interests, was a traitor.

These were his living and his dying thoughts. While he existed, he was one of those men, who, because they have been imprudent, think themselves unfortunate, and mistake their diseased mind for an implacable destiny. When he died, his death-bed was consoled by the reflection, that his persecutors might at last feel some compunction; and he quitted the world without

a pang, because he flattered himself that his departure would cost them one.

His father, who died before him, had left him no fortune, and even had not provided for his wife or child. His brother made another ineffectual attempt to accomplish a reconciliation; but his proffers of love and fortune were alike scorned, and himself insulted; and Arundel Dacre seemed to gloat on the idea, that he was an outcast and a beggar.

Yet even this strange being had his warm feelings. He adored his wife, particularly because his father had disowned her. He had a friend whom he idolized, and who, treating his occasional conduct as a species of insanity, had never deserted him. This friend had been his college companion, and, in the odd chapter of circumstances, had become a powerful political character. Dacre was a man of talents, and his friend took care that he should have an opportunity of displaying them. He was brought into Parliament, and animated by the

desire, as he thought, of triumphing over his family, he exerted himself with success. But his infernal temper spoiled all. His active quarrels, and his noisy brawls, were even more endurable than his sullen suspicions, his dark hints, and his silent hate. He was always offended, and always offending. Such a man could never succeed as a politician,—a character who, of all others, must learn to endure, to forget, and to forgive. He was soon universally shunned; but his first friend was faithful, though bitterly tried, and Dacre retired from public life on a pension.

His wife had died, and during the latter years of his life, almost his only companion was his son. He concentrated on this being all that ardent affection, which had he diffused among his fellow-creatures, might have ensured his happiness and his prosperity. Yet even sometimes he would look in his child's face with an anxious air, as if he read incubating treason, and then press him to his bosom with

unusual fervour, as if he would stifle the idea, which alone was madness.

This child was educated in an hereditary hate of the Dacre family. His uncle was daily painted as a tyrant, whom he classed in his young mind with Phalaris or Dionysius. There was nothing that he felt keener than his father's wrongs, and nothing which he believed more certain, than his uncle's wickedness. He arrived at his thirteenth year, when his father died, and he was to be consigned to the care of that uncle.

Arundel Dacre had left his son as a legacy to his friend; but that friend was a man of the world; and when the elder brother not only expressed his willingness to maintain the orphan, but even his desire to educate and adopt him as his son, he cheerfully resigned all his claims to the forlorn boy, and felt that, by consigning him to his uncle, he had most religiously discharged the trust of his confiding friend.

The nephew arrived at Castle Dacre with a

heart equally divided between misery and hatred. It seemed to him that a fate more forlorn than his had seldom been awarded to mortal. Although he found his uncle so diametrically opposite to all that his misled imagination had painted him; although he was treated with a kindness and indulgence which tried to compensate for their too long estranged affections, Arundel Dacre could never conquer the impressions of his boyhood; and had it not been for his cousin, May, a creature of whom he had not heard, and of whom no distorted image had therefore haunted his disturbed imagination,—had it not been for this beautiful girl, who greeted him with affection which warmed and won his heart, so morbid were his feelings, that he would in all probability have pined away under the roof which he should have looked upon as his own.

His departure for Eton was a relief. As he grew up, although his knowledge of life and man had long taught him the fallacy of his early

feelings; and although he now yielded a tear of pity, rather than of indignation, to the adored manes of his father, his peculiar temper and his first education never allowed him entirely to emancipate himself from his hereditary feelings. His character was combined of many and even of contrary qualities.

His talents were great, but his want of confidence made them more doubtful to himself than to the world; yet, at times, in his solitary musings, he perhaps even exaggerated his powers. He was proud, and yet worldly. He never forgot that he was a Dacre; but he desired to be the architect of his own fortune; and his very love of independence made him, at an early period, meditate on the means of managing mankind. He was reserved and cold, for his imagination required much; yet he panted for a confident, and was one of those youths with whom friendship is a passion. To conclude, he was a Protestant among Catholics; and although this circumstance, inasmuch as it

assisted him in the views which he had early indulged, was not an ungracious one, he felt that, till he was distinguished, it had lessened his consideration, since he could not count upon the sympathy of hereditary connections and ancient party. Altogether, he was one who, with the consciousness of ancient blood, the certainty of future fortune, fine talents, great accomplishments, and not slight personal advantages, was unhappy. Yet, although not of a sanguine temper, and occasionally delivered to the darkest spleen, his intense ambition sustained him, and he lived on the hope, and sometimes on the conviction, that a bright era would, some day, console him for the bitterness of his past and present life.

At school and at college, he equally distinguished himself, and was everywhere respected and often regarded: yet he had never found that friend on whom his fancy had often busied itself, and which one whose alternations of feeling were so violent, peremptorily required.

His uncle and himself viewed each other with mutual respect and regard, but confidence did not exist between them. Mr. Dacre, in spite of his long and constant efforts, despaired of raising in the breast of his nephew the flame of filial love; and had it not been for his daughter, who was the only person in the world to whom Arundel ever opened his mind, and who could, consequently, throw some light upon his wants and wishes, it would not have been in his power to evince to his nephew, that this disappointment had not affected his uncle's feelings in his favour.

When his education was completed, Mr. Dacre had wished him to take up his residence in Yorkshire, and, in every sense, to act as his son, as he was his successor. But Arundel declined this proposition. He obtained from his father's old political connection the appointment of *attaché* to a foreign embassy, and he remained on the Continent, with the exception of a yearly visit to Yorkshire, three or four years.

But his views were not in the diplomatic line, and this appointment only served as a political school until he could enter Parliament. May Dacre had wormed from him his secret, and worked with energy in his cause. An opportunity appeared to offer itself, and, under the patronage of a Catholic nobleman, he was to appear as a candidate for an open borough. It was on this business that he had returned to England; but whether he succeeded or not, this veritable history will relate another time.

CHAPTER VII.

We will go and make a morning call. The garish light of day, that never suits a chamber, was broken by a muslin veil, which sent its softened twilight through a room of moderate dimensions but of princely decoration, and which opened into a conservatory. The choice saloon was hung with rose-coloured silk, which diffused a delicate tint over the inlaid and costly cabinets. It was crowded with tables, covered with *bijouterie*. Apparently, however, a road had been cut through the furniture, by which you might wind your way up to the divinity of the temple. A ravishing perfume, which was ever changing, wandered through the apart-

ment. Now a violet breeze made you poetical; now a rosy gale called you to love. And ever and anon the strange but thrilling breath of some rare exotic summoned you, like an angel, to opening Eden. All was still and sweet, save that a fountain made you, as it were, more conscious of silence — save that the song of birds made you, as it were, more sensible of sweetness.

Upon a couch, her small head resting upon an arm covered with bracelets, which blazed like a Soldan's treasure, reclined Mrs. Dallington Vere.

She is in thought. Is her abstracted eye fixed in admiration upon that twinkling foot which, clothed in its morocco slipper, looks like a serpent's tongue, small, red, and pointed; or does a more serious feeling than self-admiration inspire this musing? Ah! a cloud courses over that pellucid brow. 'Tis gone, but it frowned like the harbinger of a storm. Again! A small but blood-red blush rises into

that clear cheek. It was momentary, but its deep colour indicated that it came from the heart. Her eye lights up with a wild and glittering fire, but the flash vanishes into darkness, and gloom follows the unnatural light. She clasps her hands; she rises from an uneasy seat, though supported by a thousand pillows, and she paces the conservatory.

A guest is announced. It is Sir Lucius Grafton.

He salutes her with that studied courtesy, which shows they are only friends, but which, when maintained between intimate acquaintance, sometimes makes wicked people suspect, that they once perhaps were more. She resumes her seat, and he throws himself into an easy chair which is opposite.

"Your note I this moment received, Bertha, and I am here. You perceive that my fidelity is as remarkable as ever."

"We had a gay meeting last night."

"Very much so. So, Lady Araminta has at last shown mercy."

"I cannot believe it."

"I have just had a note from Challoner, preliminary, I suppose, to my trusteeship. You are not the only person who hold my talents for business in high esteem."

"But Ballingford——what will he say?"

"That is his affair; and as he never, to my knowledge, spoke to the purpose, his remarks now, I suppose, are not fated to be much more apropos."

"Yet he can say things. We all know——"

"Yes, yes, we all know, but nobody believes. That is the motto of the present day; and the only way to neutralize scandal, and to counteract publicity."

Mrs. Dallington was silent, and looked a little uneasy; and her friend perceiving, that although she had sent to him so urgent a billet, she did not communicate, expressed a little surprise.

"But you wish to see me, Bertha?"

"I do very much, Lucy, and to speak to you. For these many days, I have intended it;

but I do not know how it is, I have postponed and postponed our interview. I begin to believe," she added, looking up with a faint smile,—"I am half afraid to speak."

"Good God!" said the Baronet, really alarmed, "you are in no trouble!"

"Oh no! make yourself easy. Trouble—trouble! No—no! I am not exactly in trouble. I am not in debt; I am not in a scrape; but—but—but I am in something, Lucy—something worse, perhaps—I am in love."

The Baronet looked puzzled. He did not for a moment suspect himself to be the hero; yet, although their mutual confidence was illimitable, he did not exactly see why, in the present instance, there had been such urgency to impart an event not altogether either unnatural or miraculous.

"In love!" said Sir Lucius; "a very proper situation for the prettiest woman in London. Everybody is in love with you; and I heartily rejoice that some one of our favoured sex is about to avenge our sufferings."

"*Point de moquerie*, Lucy! I am very miserable."

"Dear little pigeon, what is the matter?"

"Ah! me!"

"Speak, speak," said he in a gay tone; "you were not made for sighs, but smiles. Begin—"

"Well, then—the young Duke—"

"The devil!" said Lucius, alarmed.

"Oh! no; make yourself easy," said Mrs. Dallington, smiling; "no counterplot, I assure you, although really you do not deserve to succeed."

"Then, who is it?" eagerly asked Sir Lucius.

"You will not let me speak. The young Duke—"

"Damn the Duke!"

"How impatient you are, Lucy! I must begin with the beginning. Well, the young Duke has something to do with it."

"Pray, pray be explicit."

"In a word, then," said Mrs. Dallington, in a low voice, but with an expression of earnest-

ness which Sir Lucius had never before remarked, "I am in love, desperately in love with one whom hitherto, in accordance with your wishes, I have been driving into the arms of another. Our views, our interests are opposite; but I wish to act fairly, if possible,—I wish to reconcile them; and it is for this purpose that I have summoned you this morning."

"Arundel Dacre!" said Sir Lucius quietly, and he rapped his cane on his boot. The blood-red spot again rose in his companion's cheek.

There was silence for about a minute. Sir Lucius would not disturb it, and Mrs. Dallington again spoke.

"St. James and the little Dacre have again met. You have my secret, Lucy. I do not ask your—which I might at another time—I do not ask your good services with Arundel; but you cannot expect me to work against myself. Depend, then, no longer on my influence with May Dacre; for, to be explicit, as

we have always been, most heartily should I rejoice to see her a duchess."

"The point, Bertha," said Sir Lucius, very quietly, "is not that I can no longer count upon you as an ally; but I must, I perceive, reckon you an opponent."

"Cannot we prevent this?" asked Mrs. Dallington with energy.

"I see no alternative," said Sir Lucius, shaking his head with great unconcern. "Time will prove who will have to congratulate the other."

"Lucy," said Mrs. Dallington, with briskness and decision, "no affectation between us. Drop this assumed unconcern. You know—you know well, that no incident could occur to you at this moment more mortifying than the one I have communicated, which deranges your plans, and probably may destroy your views. You cannot misconceive my motives in making this, not very agreeable, communication. I might have pursued my object without your know-

ledge and permission. In a word, I might have betrayed you. But with me, every consideration has yielded to friendship. I cannot forget how often, and how successfully, we have combined. I should grieve to see our ancient and glorious alliance annulled. I am yet in hopes that we may both obtain our objects through its medium."

"I am not aware," said Sir Lucius, with more feeling, "that I have given you any cause to complain of my want of candour. We are in a difficult position. I have nothing to suggest, but I am ready to listen. You know, Bertha, how ready I am to adopt all your suggestions; and I know how seldom you have wanted an expedient."

"The little Dacre, then, must not marry her cousin: but we cannot flatter ourselves that such a girl will not want to marry some one: —I have a conviction that this is her decisive season. She must be occupied. In a word, Lucy, some one must be found."

The Baronet started from his chair, and nearly knocked down a table.

"Confound your tables, Bertha," said he, in a pettish tone, "I can never consult in a room full of tables." He walked into the conservatory, and she followed him. He seemed plunged in thought. They were again silent. Suddenly he seized her hand, and led her back to the sofa, on which they both sat down.

"My dear friend," he said, in a tone of agitated solemnity, "I will conceal no longer from you what I have sometimes endeavoured to conceal from myself, —— I love that girl to distraction."

"You! Lucy!"

"Yes! to distraction. Ever since we first met, her image has haunted me. I endeavoured to crush a feeling, which promised only to plunge me into anxiety, and to distract my attention from my important objects; but in vain, in vain. Her unexpected appearance yesterday has revived my passion with triple fervour. I

have passed a sleepless night, and rise with the determination to obtain her."

"You know your own power, Lucius, better perhaps than I do, or the world. We rank it high—none higher—yet nevertheless, I look upon this declaration as insanity."

He raised her hand to his lips, and pressed it with delicate warmth, and summoned his most insinuating tone. "With your aid, Bertha, I should not despair!"

"Lucy, I am your friend, perhaps your best friend,—but these Dacres. Would it were any one but a Dacre! No, no, this cannot be."

"Bertha, you know me *better* than the world—I am a *roué;* and you—are my friend; but, believe me, I am not quite so vain as to indulge for a moment in the idea, that May Dacre should be aught to me but what all might approve, and all might honour. Yes, dove, I intend her for my wife."

"Your wife, Lucy! You are, indeed, premature."

"Not quite so premature as you perhaps imagine. Know, then, that the great point is on the eve of achievement. Urged by the information which she thinks she unconsciously obtains from Lachen, and harrowed by the idea that I am about to tear her from England, she has appealed to the Duke in a manner to which they were both unused. Hitherto, her docile temper has not permitted her to abuse her empire. Now, she exerts her power with an energy to which he believed her a stranger. He is staggered by his situation. He at the same time repents having so rashly engaged the feelings of a woman, and is flattered that he is so loved. They have more than once consulted upon the expediency of an elopement."

"This is good news."

"Oh! Bertha, you must feel like me, before you can estimate it. Yes!" he clenched his fist with horrible energy,—"there is no hell like a detested wife!"

They were again silent; but when she

thought that his emotion had subsided, she again recalled their consideration to the object of their interview.

"You play a bold game, indeed; but it shall not fail, Lucy, from any deficiency on my part. —But how are we to proceed at present? Who is to interest the feelings of the little Dacre at once?"

"Who but her future husband? What I want you to do is this:—we shall call; but prepare the house to receive us not only as acquaintances, but as desirable intimates. You know what to say. I have an idea, that the divine creature entertains no very unfavourable opinion of your obedient slave; and with her temper, I care not for what she will not probably hear,—the passing opinion of a third person. I stand at present, thanks to Afy, very high with the public; and you know, although my life has not the least altered, that my indiscretions have now a dash of discretion in them; and a reformed rake, as all agree, is the per-

sonification of morality. Prepare my way with the Dacres, and all will go right. And as for this Arundel, I know him not; but you have told me enough to make me consider him the most fortunate of men. I cannot conceive that there can be any difficulty. You have, I suppose, to throw your handkerchief. As for love between cousins, I laugh at it. A glance from you will extinguish the feeble flame, as a sunbeam does a fire: and for the rest, the world does me the honour to believe, that, if Lucius Grafton be remarkable for one thing more than another, it is for the influence he attains over young minds. I will get acquainted with this boy; and, for once, let love be unattended by doubt."

Long was their counsel. The plans we have hinted at were analysed, canvassed, weighed, and finally matured. They parted after a long morning, well aware of the difficulties which awaited their fulfilment, but also full of hope.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUCH able and congenial spirits as Mrs. Dallington Vere and Sir Lucius Grafton, prosecuted their plans with the success which they had a right to anticipate. Lady Aphrodite, who was proud of her previous acquaintance, however slight, with the most distinguished girl in London, and eager to improve it, unconsciously assisted their operations. Society is so constituted, that it requires no little talent, and no slight energy, to repel the intimacy even of those whose acquaintance is evidently not desirable; and there are many people in this world mixing, apparently, with great spirit and self-esteem, in its concerns, who really owe their

constant appearance, and occasional influence, in circles of consideration, to no other qualities than their own callous impudence, and the indolence and the irresolution of their victims. They, who at the same time have no delicacy and no shame, count fearful odds: and, much as is murmured about the false estimation of riches, there is little doubt that the *parvenu* as often owes his, or rather her, advancement in society to her perseverance, as to her pelf.

When, therefore, your intimacy is courted by those whose intimacy is an honour, and that, too, with an art which conceals its purpose, you often find that you have, and are, a devoted friend, really before you have felt sufficient gratitude for the opera-box which has been so often lent, the carriage which has been ever at hand, the brother who has received such civilities, or the father who has been requested to accept some of the very unattainable tokay, which he has charmed you by admiring at your own table.

The manœuvres and the tactics of society are infinitely more numerous, and infinitely finer than those of strategy. Woe betide the rash knight, who dashes into the thick of the polished *melée* without some slight experience of his barb and his lance! Let him look to his arms! He will do well not to appear, before his helm be plumed with some reputation, however slight. He may be very rich, or even very poor. I have seen that answer with a Belisarius like air; and more than one hero without an obolus has stumbled upon a fortune, merely from his contempt of riches. If to fight, or write, or dress, be above you, why, then, you can ride, or dance, or even skate; but do not think, as many young gentlemen are apt to believe, that *talking* will serve your purpose. That is the quicksand of your young beginners. All can talk in a public assembly, that is to say, all can give us exhortations which do not move, and arguments which do not convince; but to converse in a private assembly, is a very different affair; and

rare are the characters who can be endured, if they exceed a whisper to their neighbours. But though mild and silent, be ever ready with the rapier of repartee, and be ever armed with the breastplate of good temper. You will infallibly gather laurels, if you add to these the spear of sarcasm, and the shield of *nonchalance*.

The high style of conversation where eloquence and philosophy emulate each other, where principles are profoundly expounded, and felicitously illustrated, all this has ceased. It ceased in this country with Johnson and Burke, and it requires a Johnson and a Burke for its maintenance. There is no mediocrity in such discourse,—no intermediate character between the sage and the bore. The second style, where men, not things, are the staple, but where wit, and refinement, and sensibility, invest even personal details with intellectual interest, does flourish at present, as it always must in a highly civilized society. S. is, or rather was, a

fine specimen of this school, and M. and L. are his worthy rivals. This style is indeed, for the moment, excessively interesting. Then comes your conversation man, who, I confess, is my aversion. His talk is a thing apart, got up before he enters the company, from whose conduct it should grow out. He sits in the middle of a large table, and, with a brazen voice, bawls out his anecdotes, about Sir Thomas, or Sir Humphry, Lord Blank, or my Lady Blue. He is incessant, yet not interesting; ever varying, yet always monotonous. Even if we are amused, we are no more grateful for the entertainment, than we are to the lamp over the table, for the light which it universally sheds, and to yield which, it was obtained on purpose. We are more gratified by the slight conversation of one who is often silent, but who speaks from his momentary feelings, than by all this hullabaloo. Yet this machine is generally a favourite piece of furniture with the hostess. I have often caught her eye, as he recounts some ad-

venture of the morning, which proves that he not only belongs to every club, but goes to them, light up with approbation; and then, when the ladies withdrew, and the female senate deliver their criticism upon the late actors, she will observe, with a gratified smile, to her confidante, that the dinner went off well, and that Mr. Bellow was very strong to-day!

All this is horrid, and the whole affair is a delusion. A variety of people are brought together, who all come as late as possible, and retire as soon, merely to show they have other engagements. A dinner is prepared for them, which is hurried over, in order that a certain number of dishes should be—not tasted, but seen; and provided that there is no moment that an absolute silence reigns; provided that, besides the bustling of the servants, the clattering of the plates and knives, a stray anecdote is told, which, if good, has been heard before, and which, if new, is generally flat; provided a certain number of certain names, of people of

consideration are introduced, by which some stranger, for whom the party is often secretly given, may learn the scale of civilization of which he this moment forms a part; provided the senators do not steal out too soon to the House, and their wives to another party, the hostess is congratulated on the success of her entertainment.

And this glare, and heat, and noise — this congeries of individuals without sympathy, and dishes without flavour — this is society! What an effect without a cause! A man must be very green, indeed, to stand this for two seasons. I cannot help thinking, that one consequence of the increased intelligence of the present day will be a great change in the habits of our intercourse.

After all, all conversation is an effort, and all efforts, in the long run, are wearying. The only exception is, when we interchange ideas with some individual with whom we deeply sympathize. This, perhaps, is even superior to

reverie; for we express, without artifice, all that we feel, and gauge, at the same time, the value of our ideas. But such communion must be ever rare. What delightful hours have I not passed in this manner, when pacing the Terrace at ——, with the amiable and interesting * * * *! How readily does his learned spirit supply, at all times, facts for all speculations — develope the imperfect, confirm the doubtful, illustrate the obscure! How beautifully does the calm candour of his philosophic mind repress the passionate inference, or the prejudiced conclusion! How agreeably does his deep experience of all his great and good contemporaries mingle with his unrivalled knowledge of the great and good of all ages! In a lot with which I am not altogether dissatisfied, there is, to me, no subject of more thorough self-gratulation, than that the being who is entitled to my most devoted affections should not be a bore.

Oh, my father! in these refined regions, where

I breathe clear and classic air, I think of thee. A poor return for infinite affection! And yet, our friendship is a hallowed joy:—it is my pride, and let it be thy solace. O'er the waters that cannot part our souls, I breathe good wishes. Peace brood o'er thy lettered bowers, and Love smile in the cheerful hall, that I shall not forget upon the swift Symplegades, or where warm Syria, with its palmy shore, recalls our holy ancestry!

To our tale — to our tale: we linger. Few who did not know too much of Sir Lucius Grafton could refrain from yielding him their regard when he chose to challenge it, and with the Dacres he was soon an acknowledged favourite. As a new M. P., and hitherto doubtful supporter of the Catholic cause, it was grateful to Mr. Dacre's feelings to find in him an ally, and flattering to Mr. Dacre's judgment, when that ally ventured to consult him on his friendly operations. With Miss Dacre, he was a mild, amiable man, who knew the world;

thoroughly good, but void of cant, and owner of a virtue not less to be depended on because his passions had once been strong, and he had once indulged them. His experience of life made him value domestic felicity; because he knew that there was no other source of happiness which was at once so pure and so permanent. But he was not one of those men who consider marriage as an extinguisher of all those feelings and accomplishments which throw a lustre on existence; and he did not consider himself bound, because he had plighted his faith to a beautiful woman, immediately to terminate the very conduct which had induced her to join him in the sacred and eternal pledge. His gaiety still sparkled, his wit still flashed: still he hastened to be foremost among the courteous; and still his high and ready gallantry indicated that he was not prepared to yield the fitting ornament of his still blooming youth. A thousand unobtrusive and delicate attentions which the innocent now received from him with-

out a thought, save of Lady Aphrodite's good fortune; a thousand gay and sentimental axioms, which proved not only how agreeable he was, but how enchanting he must have been; a thousand little deeds which struggled to shun the light, and which palpably demonstrated that the gaiety of his wit, the splendour of his accomplishments, and the tenderness of his soul, were only equalled by his unbounded generosity and unparalleled good temper,—all these combined had made Sir Lucius Grafton, to many, always a delightful, often a dangerous, and sometimes a fatal, companion. He was one of those whose candour is deadly. It was when he least endeavoured to conceal his character that its hideousness least appeared. He confessed sometimes so much, that you yielded that pity, which, ere the shrived culprit could receive, by some fatal alchymy, was changed into passion. His smile was a lure, his speech was a spell; but it was when he was silent, and almost gloomy, when you caught his serious

eye, charged, as it were, with passion, gazing on yours, that if you had a guardian sylph, you should have invoked its aid; and, I pray, if ever you meet the man of whom I write, your invocation may not be forgotten, or be, what is more likely—too late.

The Dacres, this season, were the subject of universal conversation. She was the distinguished beauty, and the dandies all agreed, that his dinners were worthy of his daughter. Lady Fitz-pompey was not behind the welcoming crowd. She was too politic a leader not to feel anxious to enlist under her colours a recruit who was so calculated to maintain the reputation of her forces. Fitz-pompey House must not lose its character for assembling the most distinguished, the most agreeable, and the most refined,—and May Dacre was a divinity who would summon many a crowd to her niche in this Pantheon of Fashion.

If any difficulty were for a moment anticipated in bringing about this arrangement, a

fortunate circumstance seemed sufficient to remove it. Lord St. Maurice and Arundel Dacre had been acquainted at Vienna, and though the intimacy was slight, it was sweet. St. Maurice had received many favours from the *attaché*, and as he was a man of family and reputation, had been very happy to greet him on his arrival in London. Before the Dacres made their appearance in town for the season, Arundel had been initiated in the mysteries of Fitz-pompey House, and therefore a desire from that mansion to cultivate the good graces of his Yorkshire relations, seemed not only not forced, but extremely natural. So the families met, and, to the surprise of each other, became even intimate,—for May Dacre and Lady Caroline soon evinced a mutual regard for each other. Female friendships are of rapid growth, and in the present instance, when there was nothing on each side which was not loveable, it was quite miraculous, and the friendship, particularly on the part of Lady Caroline, shot up in one night, like a blooming aloe.

I think there is nothing more lovely than the love of two beautiful women, who are not envious of each other's charms. How delightfully they impart to each other the pattern of a cap, or flounce, or frill! how charmingly they entrust some slight, slender secret about tinting a flower, or netting a purse! Now one leans over the other, and guides her inexperienced hand, as it moves in the mysteries of some novel work, and then the other looks up with an eye beaming with devotion; and then again the first leans down a little lower, and gently presses her aromatic lips upon her friend's polished forehead. These are sights which we quiet men, who, like "small Jack Horner," know where to take up a safe position, occasionally enjoy, but which your noisy fellows, who think that women never want to be alone — a sad mistake — and consequently must be always breaking or stringing a guitar, or cutting a pencil, or splitting a crow quill, or overturning the gold ink, or scribbling over a pattern, or doing any other of the thousand acts of mischief, are debarred from.

Not that these bright flowers often bloomed alone — a blossom not less brilliant generally shared with them the same *parterre*. Mrs. Dallington completed the *bouquet*, and Arundel Dacre was the butterfly, who, she was glad to perceive, was seldom absent, when her presence added beauty to the beautiful. Indeed, she had good reason to feel confidence in her attractions. Independent of her charms, which assuredly were great, her fortune, which was even greater, possessed, she was well aware, no slight allurement to one who ever trembled when he thought of his dependence, and often glowed when he mused over his ambition. His slight but increasing notice was duly estimated by one who was perfectly acquainted with his peculiar temper, and daily perceived how disregardful he was of all others, except her, and his cousin. But a cousin! She felt perfect confidence in the theory of Sir Lucius Grafton.

And the young Duke — have we forgotten him? Sooth to say, he was very seldom with our

heroine or heroines. He had called on Mr. Dacre, and had greeted him with marked cordiality, and he had sometimes met him and his daughter in society. But although invited, he had hitherto avoided being their visitor; and the comparatively secluded life which he now led prevented him from seeing them often at other houses. Mr. Dacre, who was unaware of what had passed between him and his daughter, thought his conduct inexplicable; but his former guardian remembered, that it was not the first time that his behaviour had been unusual; and it was never the disposition of Mr. Dacre to promote explanations.

Our hero felt annoyed at his own weakness. It would have been infinitely more worthy of so celebrated, so unrivalled a personage as the Duke of St. James, not to have given the woman who had rejected him this evidence of her power. According to etiquette, he should have called there daily, and have dined there weekly, and yet never have given the former

object of his adoration the slightest idea that he cared a breath for her presence. According to etiquette, he should never have addressed her but in a vein of *persiflage*, and with a smile, which indicated his perfect heartease, and her bad taste. According to etiquette, he should have flirted with every woman in her company, rode with her in the Park, walked with her in the Gardens, chatted with her at the Opera, and champaigned with her on the river; and finally, to prove how sincere he was in his former estimation of her judgment, have consulted her on the presents which he should make to some intimate friend of hers, whom he announces as his future bride. This is the way to manage a woman; and the result may be conceived. She stares, she starts, she sighs, she weeps; feels highly offended at her friend daring to accept him; writes a letter of rejection herself to the affianced damsel, which she makes him sign, and then presents him with the hand which she always meant to be his.

But this was above our hero. The truth is, whenever he thought of May Dacre, his spirit sank. She had cowed him; and her arrival in London had made him as dissatisfied with his present mode of life, as he had been with his former career. They had met again, and under circumstances apparently, to him, the most unfavourable. Although he was hopeless, yet he dreaded to think what she might hear of him. Her contempt was bitter; her dislike would even be worse. Yet it seemed impossible to retrieve. He was plunged deeper than he imagined. Embarrassed, entangled, involved, he flew to Lady Afy, half in pique, and half in misery. Passion had ceased to throw a glittering veil around this idol; but she was kind, and pure, and gentle, and devoted. It was consoling to be loved, to one who was so wretched. It seemed to him, that life must ever be a blank without the woman who, a few months ago, he had felt an encumbrance. The recollection of past joys was

balm to one who was so forlorn. He shuddered at the thought of losing his only precious possession, and he was never more attached to his mistress, than when the soul of friendship rose from the body of expired love.

CHAPTER IX.

The Duke of St. James dines to-day with Mr. Annesley. Men and things should be our study; and it is universally acknowledged, that a dinner is the most important of affairs, and a dandy the most important of individuals. If I liked, I could give you a description of the *fête*, which should make all your mouths water,—and my cookery has been admired in its day, which was right; because my gastronomical details were the reminiscences of experience, and not of reading: but every one cooks now, and ekes out his page by robbing Jarrin, and by rifling Dolby.

Charles Annesley was never seen to more ad-

vantage than when a host. Then his supercilousness would, if not vanish, at least, subside. He was not less calm, but somewhat less cold, like a summer lake. Therefore we will have an eye upon his party; because, to dine with dandies should be a prominent feature in your career, and must not be omitted in this sketch of the " Life and Times" of our young hero.

The party was of that number which at once secures a variety of conversation, and the impossibility of two persons speaking at the same time. The guests were—his Grace, Lord Squib, and Lord Darrell.

The repast, like every thing connected with Mr. Annesley, was refined, and exquisite, rather slight than solid, and more novel than various. There was no affectation of *gourmandise*, the vice of male dinners. Your imagination and your sight were not at the same time dazzled and confused by an agglomeration of the peculiar luxuries of every clime and every season. As you mused over a warm and sunny flavour

of a brown soup, your host did not dilate upon the milder and moonlight beauties of a white one. A gentle dallying with a whiting—that chicken of the ocean, was not a signal for a panegyric of the darker attraction of a *matelotte à la royale.* The disappearance of the first course did not herald a catalogue of discordant dainties. You were not recommended to neglect the *croquettes*, because the *boudins* might claim attention; and while you were crowning your important labours with a quail, you were not reminded that the *paté de Troyes*, unlike the less reasonable human race, would feel offended if it were not cut. Then the wines were few. Some sherry, with a pedigree like an Arabian, heightened the flavour of the dish, not interfered with it; as a Toadey keeps up the conversation, which he does not distract. A goblet of Graffenburg, with a bouquet like woman's breath, made you, as you remembered some liquid which it had been your fate to fall upon, suppose that German wines, like Ger-

man barons, required some discrimination, and that hock, like other titles, was not always the sign of the high nobility of its owner. A glass of claret was the third grace. But if I had been there, I should have devoted myself to one of the sparkling sisters; for I think that one wine, like one woman, is sufficient to interest our feelings for four-and-twenty hours. Fickleness, I abhor.

"I observed you riding to-day with the gentle Leonora, St. James," said Mr. Annesley.

"No! her sister."

"Indeed! Those girls are uncommonly alike. The fact is now, that neither face nor figure depends upon nature."

"No," said Lord Squib; "all that the artists of the present day want is a model. Let a family provide one handsome sister, and the hideousness of the others will not prevent them, under good management, from being mistaken, by the best judges, for the beauty, six times in the same hour."

"You are trying, I suppose, to account for your unfortunate error at Cleverley's, on Monday, Squib," said Lord Darrell, laughing.

"Pooh! pooh! all nonsense."

"What was it?" said Mr. Annesley.

"Not a word true," said Lord Squib, stifling curiosity.

"I believe it," said the Duke, without having heard a syllable. "Come Darrell, out with it!"

"It really is nothing very particular,—only, it is whispered, that Squib said something to Lady Cleverley, which made her ring the bell, and that he excused himself to his Lordship by protesting, that from their similarity of dress and manner, and strong family likeness, he had mistaken the Countess for her sister."

Omnes. "Well done, Squib! And were you introduced to the right person?"

"Why," said his Lordship, "fortunately, I contrived to fall out about the settlements, and so, I escaped."

"So the chaste Diana is to be the new patroness," said Lord Darrell.

"So I understand," rejoined Mr. Annesley. "This is the age of unexpected appointments."

"*On dit*, that when it was notified to the party most interested, there was a rider to the bill, excluding my Lord's relations."

"Ha, ha, ha," faintly laughed Mr. Annesley.—"What have they been doing so very particular?"

"Nothing," said Lord Squib. "That is just their fault. They have every recommendation; but when any member of that family is in a room, every body feels so exceedingly sleepy, that they all sink to the ground. That is the reason that there are so many Ottomans at Heavyside House."

"Is it true," asked the Duke, "that his Grace really has a flapper?"

"Most unquestionably," said Lord Squib. "The other day I was announced, and his attendant was absent. He had left his instrument

on a sofa. I immediately took it up, and touched my Lord up on his hump. I never knew him more entertaining. He really was quite lively."

"But Diana is a favourite goddess of mine," said Annesley,—"taste that Hock."

"Superb! Where did you get it?"

"A present from poor Raffenburg."

"Ah! where is he now?"

"At Paris, I believe."

"Paris! and where is she?"

"I liked Raffenburg," said Lord Squib; "he always reminded me of a country innkeeper who supplies you with pipes and tobacco gratis, provided that you will dine with him."

"He had unrivalled Meerschaums," said Mr. Annesley, "and he was most liberal. There are two.—You know, I never use them,—but they are handsome furniture."

"Those Champagnys are fine girls," said the Duke of St. James.

"Very pretty creatures! Do you know, St.

James," said Annesley, " I think the youngest one something like May Dacre?"

" Indeed! I cannot say the resemblance struck me."

" I see old mother Champagny dresses her as much like the Doncaster belle, as she possibly can."

" Yes, and spoils her," said Lord Squib; " but old mother Champagny, with all her fuss, was ever a bad cook, and overdid every thing."

" Young Champagny, they say," observed Lord Darrell, " is in a sort of a scrape."

" Ah! what?"

" Oh! some confusion at head-quarters.—A great tallow-chandler's son got into the regiment, and committed some heresy at mess."

" Champagny is in want of the loan of a thousand pounds, I suppose," said Mr. Annesley.

" I do not know the brother," said the Duke.

"You are very fortunate, then. He is one of those unendurables, fit only for a regiment. To give you an idea of him — suppose you met him here, (which you never will,) he would write to you the next day, 'My dear St. James.'"

"My tailor presented me his best compliments, the other morning," said the Duke.

"The world is growing too familiar," said Mr. Annesley.

"There must be some great remedy," said Lord Darrell.

"Yes!" said Lord Squib, with still greater indignation. "Tradesmen, now-a-days, console themselves for not getting their bills paid, by asking their customers to dinner."

"It is very shocking," said Mr. Annesley, with a forlorn air: "do you know? I never enter society now, without taking as many preliminary precautions, as if the plague raged in all our chambers. In vain have I hitherto prided myself on my existence being unknown to the million. I never now stand still in a

street, lest my portrait be caught for a lithograph; I never venture to a strange dinner, lest I should stumble upon a fashionable novelist: and even with all this vigilance, and all this denial, I have an intimate friend whom I cannot cut, and who, they say, writes for the Court Journal."

"But why cannot you cut him?" asked Lord Darrell.

"He is my brother; and, you know, I pride myself upon my domestic feelings."

"Yes!" said Lord Squib,—"to judge from what the world says, one would think, Annesley, you were a Brummell!"

"Squib, not even in jest, couple my name with one whom I will not call a savage, merely because he is unfortunate."

"What did you think of little Eugenie, Annesley, last night?" asked the Duke.

"Very well—very well, indeed—something like Brocard's worst."

"I was a little disappointed in her *début*,

and much interested in her success. She was rather a favourite of mine at Paris, so I took her home to the Alhambra yesterday, with a whole bevy, and Claudius Piggott and Co. I had half a mind to pull you in, but I know you do not much admire Piggott."

"On the contrary, I have been in Piggott's company, without being very much offended."

"I think Piggott improves," said Lord Darrell. "It was those waistcoats which excited such a prejudice against him, when he first came over."

"What! a prejudice against Peacock Piggott!" said Lord Squib; "pretty Peacock Piggott! Tell it not in Gath: whisper it not in Ascalon — and, above all, insinuate it not to Lady de Courcy."

"There is not much danger of my insinuating anything to her," said Mr. Annesley.

"Your compact, I hope, is religiously observed," said the Duke.

"Yes — very well. There was a slight in-

fraction once, but I sent Henry Fitzroy as an ambassador, and war was not declared."

"Do you mean," asked Lord Squib, "when your cabriolet broke down before her door, and she sent out to request that you would make yourself quite at home?"

"I mean that fatal day," replied Mr. Annesley. "I afterwards discovered she had bribed my Tiger."

"Do you know Eugenie's sister, St. James?" asked Lord Darrell.

"Yes: she is very clever, indeed — very popular at Paris. But I like Eugenie, because she is so good-natured. That girl always laughs so! One good grin from her always cures my spleen!"

"You should buy her, then," said his host, "for she must be invaluable. For my part, I consider existence a bore."

"So it is," said Lord Squib. "Do you remember that girl at Madrid, Annesley?"

"What, Isidora! She is coming over."

"But I thought it was high treason to plunder the grandees' dovecotes?"

"Why, all our regular official negotiations have failed. She is not permitted to treat with a foreign manager; but the new ambassador has a secretary, and that secretary has a *penchant*; and so—Isidora is to be smuggled over."

"In a red box, I suppose," said Lord Squib.

"I rather admire our Adele," said the Duke of St. James.

"Oh! certainly; she is a favourite of mine."

"But I like that wild little Ducis," said Lord Squib. "She puts me in mind of a wild cat."

"And Marunia, of a Bengal tiger," said his Grace.

"She is a fine woman, though," said Lord Darrell.

"I think your cousin, St. James," said Lord Squib, "will get into a scrape with Marunia.

I remember Chetwynd telling me,—and he was not apt to complain on that score,—that he never should have broken up, if it had not been for her."

"But he was a most extravagant scoundrel," said Mr. Annesley: "he called me in at his *bouleversement* for advice, as I have the reputation of a good economist. I do not know how it is, though I see these things perpetually happen; but why men, and men of small fortunes, should commit such follies, really exceeds my comprehension. Ten thousand pounds for trinkets, and half as much for old furniture! Why, this is worse than Squib's bill of seventeen hundred pounds for snuff!"

"It was not seventeen hundred pounds, Annesley: that included cigars."

"Chetwynd kept it up a good many years, though, I think," said Lord Darrell. "I remember going to see his rooms, when I first came over. You recollect his mother-of-pearl fountain of Cologne water?"

"Mille Colonnes fitted up his place, I think?" asked the young Duke,—"but it was before my time."

"Oh! yes, little Bijou," said Annesley. "He has done you justice, St. James. I think the Alhambra much the prettiest thing in town."

"I was attacked the other day most vigorously by Mrs. Dallington to obtain a sight," said Lord Squib. "I referred her to Lucy Grafton.—Do you know, St. James, I have half a strange idea, that there is a renewal in that quarter?"

"So they say," said the Duke; "if so, I confess I am surprised." But they remembered Lord Darrell, and the conversation turned.

"These are pretty horses of Lincoln Graves," said Mr. Annesley.

"Neat cattle, as Bagshot says," observed Lord Squib.

"Is it true that Bag is going to marry one of the Wrekins?" asked the Duke.

"Which?" asked Lord Squib; "not Sophy,

surely? I thought she was to be your cousin. I dare say," he added, "a false report. I suppose, to use a Bagshotism, his governor wants it; but I should think Lord Cub would not yet be taken in. By the by, he says you have promised to propose him at White's, St. James."

"Oppose him, I said," rejoined the Duke. "Bag really never understands English. However, I think it as probable that he will lounge in the bow-window, as on the Treasury bench. That was his 'governor's' last shrewd plan."

"Darrell," said Lord Squib, "is there any chance of my being a Commissioner for any thing? It struck me last night, that I had never been in office."

"I do not think, Squib, that you ever will be in office, if even you be appointed."

"On the contrary, my good fellow, my punctuality should surprise you. I should like very much to be a lay-lord, because I cannot afford to keep a yacht, and theirs, they

say, are not sufficiently used, for the Admirals think it spooney, and the land-lubbers are always sick."

"I think myself of sporting a yacht this summer," said the Duke of St. James. "Be my captain, Squib."

"Agreed! Really, if you be serious, I will commence my duties to-morrow."

"I am serious. I think it will be rather amusing. I give you full authority to do exactly what you like, provided, in two months' time, I have the best vessel in the club; copper-bottom, crack crew, and ten knots an hour."

"You are all witnesses," said Lord Squib, "and so I begin to press. Annesley, your dinner is so good, that you shall be purser; and Darrell, you are a man of business,—you shall be purser's clerk. For the rest, I think St. Maurice may claim a place, and——"

"Peacock Piggott, by all means," said the Duke. "A gay sailor is quite the thing."

"And Henry Fitzroy," said Annesley, "because I am under obligations to him, and promised to have him in my eye."

"And Bagshot for a butt," said the Duke.

"And Backbite for a buffoon," said Mr. Annesley.

"And for the rest," said the young Duke, "the rest of the crew, I vote shall be women. The Champagnys will just do."

"And the little Trevors," said Lord Darrell.

"And Long Harrington," said Lord Squib. "She is my beauty."

"And the young Ducie," said Annesley. "And Mrs. Dallington of course, and Caroline St. Maurice, and Charlotte Bloomerly; really, she was dressed most prettily last night; and, above all, the Queen Bee of the hive—May Dacre, eh! St. James? And I have another proposition," said Annesley with increased and unusual animation. "May Dacre won the St. Leger, and ruled the course; and May Dacre

shall win the cup, and rule the waves. Our yacht shall be christened by the Lady Bird of Yorkshire."

"What a delightful thing it would be," said the Duke of St. James, "if, throughout life, we might always choose our crew; cull the beauties, and banish the bores."

"But that is impossible," said Lord Darrell. "Every ornament of society is counterbalanced by some accompanying blur. I have invariably observed, that the ugliness of a *chaperon* is exactly in proportion to the charms of her charge; and that if a man be distinguished for his wit, his appearance, his style, or any other good quality, he is sure to be saddled with some family or connection, who require all his popularity to gain them a passport into the crowd."

"One might collect a very unexceptionable *coterie* from our present crowd," said Mr. Annesley. "It would be curious to assemble all the pet lambs of the flock."

"Is it impossible?" asked the Duke.

"Burlington is the only man who dare try," said Lord Darrell.

"I doubt whether any individual would have sufficient pluck," said Lord Squib.

"Yes," said the Duke, "it must, I think, be a joint-stock company to share the glory and the odium. Let us do it!"

There was a start, and a silence, broken by Annesley in a low voice.

"By Heavens, it would be sublime—if practicable; but the difficulty does indeed seem insurmountable."

"Why, we would not do it," said the young Duke, "if it were not difficult. The first thing is to get a frame for our picture, to hit upon some happy pretence for assembling in an impromptu style the young and gay. Our purpose must not be too obvious. It must be something to which all expect to be asked, and where the presence of all is impossible; so that in fixing upon a particular member of a

family, we may seem influenced by the wish, that no circle should be neglected. Then, too, it should be something like a water-party or a *fête-champetre*, where colds abound, and fits are always caught, so that a consideration for the old and the infirm may authorize us not to invite them; then too—

Omnes. "Bravo! bravo! St. James. It shall be! it shall be!"

"It must be a *fête-champetre*," said Annesley decidedly, "and as far from town as possible."

"Twickenham is at your service," said the Duke.

"Just the place, and just the distance. The only objection is, that by being yours, it will saddle the enterprise too much upon you. We must all bear our share in the uproar, for, trust me, there will be one; but there are a thousand ways by which our responsibility may be insisted upon. For instance, let us make a list of all our guests, and then let one of us act as secretary, and sign the invitations, which shall

be like tickets. No other name need appear, and the hosts will indicate themselves at the place of rendezvous."

"My Lords," said Lord Squib, "I rise to propose the health of Mr. Secretary Annesley, and I think if any one carry the business through, it will be he."

"I accept the trust. At present, gentlemen, be silent as night; for we have too much to mature, and our success depends upon our secrecy."

CHAPTER X.

ARUNDEL DACRE, though little apt to cultivate an acquaintance with any one, called on the young Duke the morning after their meeting. The truth is, his imagination was touched by our hero's appearance. His Grace possessed all that accomplished manner of which he painfully felt the want, and to which he eagerly yielded his admiration. He earnestly desired the Duke's friendship, but with his usual *mauvaise honte*, their meeting did not advance his wishes. He was as shy and constrained as usual, and being really desirous of appearing to advantage, and leaving an impression in his favour, his manner was even divest-

ed of that somewhat imposing coldness, which was not altogether ineffective. In short, he was extremely disagreeable. The Duke was courteous, as he usually was, and ever to the Dacres, but he was not cordial. He disliked Arundel Dacre,—in a word, he looked upon him as his favoured rival. The two young men occasionally met, but did not grow more intimate. Studiously polite the young Duke ever was both to him and to his lovely cousin, for his pride concealed his pique, and he was always afraid lest his manner should betray his mind.

In the mean time, Sir Lucius Grafton apparently was running his usual course of triumph. It is fortunate that those who will watch and wonder about every thing, are easily satisfied with a reason, and are ever quick in detecting a cause: so Mrs. Dallington Vere was the fact, that duly accounted for the Baronet's intimacy with the Dacres. All was right again between them. It was unusual, to be sure—these *rifaci-*

mentos; still she was a charming woman; and it was well known that Lucius had spent twenty thousand on the county. Where was that to come from, they should like to know, but from old Dallington Vere's Yorkshire estates, which he had so wisely left to his pretty wife by the pink paper codicil?

And this lady of so many loves,—how felt she? Most agreeably, as all dames do who dote upon a passion, which they feel convinced will be returned, but which still waits for a response. Arundel Dacre would yield her a smile from a face more worn by thought than joy; and Arundel Dacre, who was wont to muse alone, was now ever ready to join his cousin and her friends in the ride or the promenade. Miss Dacre, too, had noticed to her a kindly change in her cousin's conduct to her father. He was more cordial to his uncle, sought to pay him deference, and seemed more desirous of gaining his good-will. The experienced eye, too, of this pretty woman allowed her often to

observe that her hero's presence was not particularly occasioned, or particularly inspired, by his cousin. In a word, it was to herself that his remarks were addressed, his attentions devoted, and often she caught his dark and liquid eye fixed upon her beaming and refulgent brow.

Sir Lucius Grafton proceeded with that strange mixture of craft and passion, which characterised him. Each day, his heart yearned more for the being on whom his thoughts should never have pondered. Now exulting in her increased confidence, she seemed already his victim; now awed by her majestic spirit, he despaired even of her being his bride. Now melted by her unsophisticated innocence, he cursed even the least unhallowed of his purposes; and now enchanted by her consummate loveliness, he forgot all but her beauty and his own passion.

Often had he dilated to her, with the skill of an arch deceiver, on the blessings of domestic

joy; often, in her presence, had his eye sparkled, when he watched the infantile graces of some playful children. Then he would embrace them with a soft care and gushing fondness, enough to melt the heart of any mother whom he was desirous to seduce, and then, with a half murmured sigh, he regretted, in broken accents, that he too was not a father.

In due time, he proceeded even farther. Dark hints of domestic infelicity broke unintentionally from his ungoverned lips. May Dacre stared. He quelled the tumult of his thoughts, struggled with his outbreaking feelings, and triumphed; yet not without a tear, which forced its way down a face not formed for grief, and quivered upon his fair and downy cheek. Sir Lucius Grafton was well aware of the magic of his beauty, and used his charms to betray, as if he were a woman.

May Dacre, whose soul was sympathy, felt in silence for this excellent, this injured, this unhappy, this agreeable man. Ill could even

her practised manner cheek the current of her mind, or conceal from Lady Aphrodite, that she possessed her dislike. As for the young Duke, he fell into the lowest abyss of her opinions, and was looked upon as alike, frivolous, heartless, and irreclaimable.

But how are the friends with whom we dined yesterday? Frequent were the meetings, deep the consultations, infinite the suggestions, innumerable the expedients. In the morning, they met and breakfasted with Annesley; in the afternoon they met, and lunched with Lord Squib; in the evening they met and dined with Lord Darrell, and at night they met and supped at the Alhambra. Each council only the more convinced them, that the scheme was feasible, and must be glorious. At last their ideas were matured, and Annesley took steps to break the great event to the world, who were on the eve of being astonished.

He repaired to Lady Bloomerly. The world sometimes talked of her Ladyship and Mr. An-

nesley,—the world were quite wrong, as they often are on this subject. Mr. Annesley knew the value of a female friend. By Lady Bloomerly's advice, the plan was entrusted in confidence to about a dozen dames equally influential. Then a few of the most considered male friends heard a strange report. Lord Darrell dropped a rumour at the Treasury, but with his finger on the mouth, and leaving himself out of the list, proceeded to give his favourable opinion of the project, merely as a disinterested and expected guest. Then the Duke promised Peacock Piggott one night at the Alhambra, but swore him to solemn secrecy over a vase of sherbet. Then Squib told his tailor, in consideration that his bill should not be sent in; and finally, the Bird of Paradise betrayed the whole affair to the musical world, who were, of course, all agog. Then, when rumour began to wag its hundred tongues, the twelve peeresses found themselves bound in honour to step into the breach, yielded the plan their decided approbation, and

their avowed patronage, puzzled the grumblers, silenced the weak, and sneered down the obstinate.

The invitations began to issue, and the outcry against them burst forth. A *fronde* was formed, but they wanted De Retz; and many kept back, with the hope of being bribed from joining it. The four cavaliers soon found themselves at the head of a strong party, and then, like a faction who have successfully struggled for toleration, they now openly maintained their supremacy. It was too late to cabal. The uninvited could only console themselves by a passive sulk, or an active sneer; but this would not do, and their bilious countenances betrayed their chagrin.

The difficulty now was, not to keep the bores away, but to obtain a few of the beauties, who hesitated. A *chaperon* must be found for one, another must be added on to a party, like a star to the cluster of a constellation. Among those whose presence was most ardently desired,

but seemed most doubtful, was May Dacre. An invitation had been sent to her father; but he was out of town, and she did not like to join so peculiar a party, without him: but it was unanimously agreed, that, without her, the affair would be a failure; and Charles Annesley was sent, envoy extraordinary, to arrange. With the good aid of his friend Mrs. Dallington, all was at length settled; and fervid prayers that the important day might be ushered in by a smiling sun, were offered up during the next fortnight, at half-past six every morning, by all civilized society, who then hurried to their night's rest.

CHAPTER XI.

The *fête* at "the Pavilion"—such was the title of the Twickenham Villa—though the subject of universal interest, was anticipated by no one with more eager anxiety than by Sir Lucius Grafton, for that day, he determined, should decide the fate of the Duke of St. James. He was sanguine as to the result—nor without reason. For the last month, he had, by his dark machinery, played desperately upon the feelings of Lady Aphrodite; and more than once had she despatched rapid notes to her admirer, for counsel and for consolation. The Duke was more skilful in soothing her griefs than in devising expedients for their removal.

He treated the threatened as a distant evil! and wiped away her tears in a manner which is almost an encouragement to weep.

At last, the eventful morn arrived, and a scorching sun made those exult, to whom the barge and the awning promised a progress equally calm and cool. Woe to the dusty britscha!—woe to the molten furnace of the crimson cabriolet!

They came, as the stars come out from the Heavens, what time the sun is in his first repose—now a single hero, brilliant as a planet—now a splendid party, clustering like a constellation. Music is on the waters, and perfume on the land: each moment, a barque glides up with its cymbals—each moment, a cavalcade bright with bouquets!

Ah! gathering of brightness!—ah! meeting of lustre!—why, why are you to be celebrated by one so obscure and dull as I am! Ye Lady Carolines, and ye Lady Franceses—ye Lady Barbaras, and ye Lady Blanches, is it my fault?

Oh! graceful Lord Francis, why, why have you left us — why, why have you exchanged your Ionian lyre for an Irish harp! You were not made for politics — leave them to clerks. Fly — fly back to pleasure, to frolic and fun! Confess, now, that you sometimes do feel a little queer. I say nothing of the difference between May Fair and Donnybrook.

And thou, too, Luttrell — gayest bard that ever threw off a triplet amid the clattering of cabs and the chattering of clubs,—art thou, too, mute? Where — where dost thou linger? Is our Druid among the oaks of Ampthill — or, like a truant Etonian, is he lurking among the beeches of Burnham? What! has the immortal letter, unlike all other good advice, absolutely not been thrown away? — or is the jade incorrigible? Whichever be the case, you need not be silent. There is yet enough to do, and yet enough to instruct. Teach us, that wealth is not elegance; that profusion is not magnificence; and that splendour is not beauty.

Teach us, that taste is a talisman, which can do greater wonders than the millions of the loan-monger. Teach us, that to vie is not to rival; and to imitate, not to invent. Teach us, that pretension is a bore. Teach us, that wit is excessively good-natured, and, like champagne, not only sparkles, but is sweet. Teach us the vulgarity of malignity. Teach us, that envy spoils our complexions, and that anxiety destroys our figure. Catch the fleeting colours of that sly chameleon, Cant, and show what excessive trouble we are ever taking to make ourselves miserable and silly. Teach us all this, and Aglaia shall stop a crow in its course, and present you with a pen — Thalia hold the golden fluid in a Sevre vase — and Euphrosyne support the violet-coloured scroll.

The four hosts greeted the arrivals, and assisted the disembarkations, like the famous four sons of Aymon. They were all dressed alike, and their costume excited great attention. At first, it was to have been very plain — black

and white, and a single rose; but it was settled, that simplicity had been overdone, and, like a country-girl after her first season, had turned into a most affected baggage,—so they agreed to be regal; and fancy uniforms, worthy of the Court of Oberon, were the order of the day. I shall not describe them, for the description of costume is the most inventive province of our historical novelists, and I never like to be unfair, or trench upon my neighbour's lands or rights: but the Alhambra button indicated a mystical confederacy, and made the women quite frantic with curiosity.

The guests wandered through the gardens, always various, and now a Paradise of novelty. There were four brothers, fresh from the wildest recesses of the Carpathian Mount, who threw out such woodnotes wild, that all the artists stared; and it was universally agreed, that had they not been French chorus-singers, they would have been quite a miracle. But the Lapland sisters were the true prodigy, who

danced the Mazurka in the national style. There was also a fire-eater; but some said he would never set the river in flames, though he had an antidote against all poisons! But then, our Mithridates always tried its virtues on a stuffed poodle, whose bark evinced its vitality. There also was a giant in the wildest parts of the shrubbery, and a dwarf, on whom the ladies showered their sugar-plums, and who, in return, offered them tobacco. But it was not true, that the giant sported stilts, or that the dwarf was a sucking-babe. Some people are so suspicious. Then a bell rang, and assembled them in the concert-room; and the Bird of Paradise, who, to-day, was consigned to the cavaliership of Peacock Piggott, condescended to favour them with a new song, which no one had ever heard, and which, consequently, made them feel more intensely all the sublimity of exclusiveness. Shall I forget the panniers of shoes which Melnotte had placed in every quarter of the gardens? I will say nothing of Ma-

radán's cases of caps, because, for this incident, Lord Bagshot is my authority.

On a sudden, it seemed that a thousand bugles broke the blue air, and they were summoned to a *dejeuner* in four crimson tents, worthy of Sardanapalus. Over each waved the scutcheon of the president. Glittering were the glories of the hundred quarterings of the house of Darrell. "*Si non è vero è ben trovato*," was the motto.—Lord Darrell's grandfather had been a successful lawyer.—Lord Squib's emblazonry was a satire on its owner. "*Holdfast*" was the motto of a man who had let loose. Annesley's simple shield spoke of the Conquest; but all paled before the banner of the house of Hauteville, for it indicated an alliance with royalty. The attendants of each pavilion wore the livery of its Lord.

Shall I attempt to describe the delicacy of this banquet, where imagination had been racked for novel luxury? Through the centre of each table ran a rivulet of rose-water, and gold

and silver fish glanced in its unrivalled course. The bouquets were exchanged every half hour, and music soft and subdued, but constant and thrilling, wound them up by exquisite gradations to that pitch of refined excitement, which is so strange an union of delicacy and voluptuousness, when the soul, as it were, becomes sensual, and the body, as it were, dissolves into spirit. And in this choice assembly, where all was youth, and elegance, and beauty, was it not right, that every sound should be melody, every sight a sight of loveliness, and every thought a thought of pleasure?

They arose, and assembled on the lawn, where they found to their surprise had arisen in their absence a Dutch Fair. Numerous were the booths,—innumerable were the contents. The first artists had arranged the picture and the costumes: the first artists had made the trinkets and the toys. And what a very agreeable fair, where all might suit their fancy without the permission of that sulky tyrant,—a purse! All

were in excellent humour, and no *mauvaise honte* prevented them from plundering the *boutiques*. The noble proprietors set the example. Annesley offered a bouquet of precious stones to Charlotte Bloomerly, and it was accepted, and the Duke of St. James showered a sack of whimsical *breloques* among a scrambling crowd of laughing beauties. Among them was May Dacre. He had not observed her. Their eyes met, and she laughed. It seemed that he had never felt happiness before.

Ere the humours of the fair could be exhausted, they were summoned to the margin of the river, where four painted and gilded galleys, which might have sailed down the Cydnus, and each owning its peculiar chief, prepared to struggle for preeminence in speed. All betted; and the Duke, encouraged by the smile, hastened to Miss Dacre to try to win back some of his Doncaster losses, but Arundel Dacre had her arm in his, and she was evidently delighted with his discourse. His Grace's blood turned, and he walked away.

It was sunset, when they returned to the lawn; and then the ball-room presented itself; but the twilight was long, and the night was warm; there were no hateful dews, no odious mists, and therefore a great number danced on the lawn. The fair was illuminated, and all the little *marchandes* and their lusty porters walked about in their costume.

The Duke again rallied his courage, and seeing Arundel Dacre with Mrs. Dallington Vere, he absolutely asked May Dacre to dance. She was engaged. He doubted, and walked into the house disconsolate; yet if he had waited one moment, he would have seen Sir Lucius Grafton rejoin her, and lead her to the *cotillon* that was forming on the turf. The Duke sauntered to Lady Aphrodite, but she would not dance,—yet she did not yield his arm, and proposed a stroll. They wandered away to the extremity of the grounds. Fainter and fainter grew the bursts of the revellers, yet neither of them spoke much, for both were dull.

Yet at length her Ladyship did speak, and amply made up for her previous silence. All former scenes, to this, were but as the preface to the book. All she knew and all she dreaded, all her suspicions, all her certainties, all her fears, were poured forth in painful profusion. This night was to decide her fate. She threw herself on his mercy, if he had forgotten his love. Out dashed all those arguments, all those appeals, all those assertions, which they say are usual under these circumstances. She was a woman; he was a man. She had staked her happiness on this venture; he had a thousand cards to play. Love, and first love with her, as with all women, was every thing; he and all men, at the worst, had a thousand resources. He might plunge into politics,—he might game, —he might fight, — he might ruin himself in innumerable ways, but she could only ruin herself in one. — Miserable woman! Miserable sex! She had given him her all. She knew it was little: would she had more! She knew she was un-

worthy of him: would she were not! She did not ask him to sacrifice himself to her: she could not expect it; she did not even desire it. Only, she thought he ought to know exactly the state of affairs and of consequences, and that certainly if they were parted, which assuredly they would be, most decidedly she would droop, and fade, and die. She wept, she sobbed; his entreaties alone seemed to prevent hysterics.

These scenes are painful at all times, — and even the callous, they say, have a twinge; but when the actress is really beautiful and pure, as this lady was, and the actor young, and inexperienced, and amiable, as this actor was, the consequences are more serious than is usual. The Duke of St. James was unhappy—he was discontented — he was dissatisfied with himself. He did not love this lady, if love were the passion which he entertained for May Dacre,—but she loved him. He knew that she was beautiful, and he was convinced that she was excel-

lent. The world is malicious,—but the world had agreed that Lady Aphrodite was an unblemished pearl: yet this jewel was reserved for him! Intense gratitude almost amounted to love. In short, he had no idea, at this moment, that feelings are not in our power." His were captive, even if entrapped. It was a great responsibility to desert this creature, the only one from whom he had experienced devotion. To conclude: a season of extraordinary dissipation, to use no harsher phrase, had somewhat exhausted the nervous powers of our hero: his energies were deserting him; he had not heart, or heartlessness enough to extricate himself from this dilemma. It seemed that, if this being to whom he was indebted for so much joy, were miserable, he must be unhappy; that if she died, life ought to have—could have no charms for him. He kissed away her tears—he pledged his faith—and Lady Aphrodite Grafton was his betrothed!

She wonderfully recovered. Her deep but

silent joy seemed to repay him even for this bitter sacrifice. Compared with the late racking of his feelings, the present calm, which was merely the result of suspense being destroyed, seemed happiness. His conscience whispered approbation, and he felt that, for once, he had sacrificed himself to another.

They re-entered the Villa, and he took the first opportunity of wandering alone to the least frequented parts of the grounds:—his mind demanded solitude, and his soul required soliloquy.

"So the game is up! Truly, a most lame and impotent conclusion! And this, then, is the result of all my high fancies and indefinite aspirations! Verily, I am a very distinguished hero, and have not abused my unrivalled advantages in the least! What! am I bitter on myself? There will be enough to sing my praises, without myself joining in this chorus of congratulation. Oh! fool, fool! Now I know what folly is. But barely fifteen months since, I

stepped upon these shores, full of hope and full of pride; and now I leave them — how? Oh! my dishonoured fathers! Even my posterity, which God grant I may not have, will look on my memory with hatred, and on her's with scorn!

"Well, I suppose we must live for ourselves. We both of us know the world; and Heaven can bear witness that we should not be haunted by any uneasy hankering after what has brought us such a heartache. If it were for love—if it were for—but away!—I will not profane her name—If it were for her that I was thus sacrificing myself, I could bear it—I could welcome it. I can imagine perfect and everlasting bliss in the sole society of one single being—but she is not that being. Let me not conceal it; let me wrestle with this bitter conviction!

"And am I, indeed, bound to close my career thus—to throw away all hope, all chance of felicity, at my age, for a point of honour? No, no,—it is not that. After all, I have

experienced that with her, and from her, which I have with no other woman; and she is so good, so gentle, and all agree, so lovely! How infinitely worse would her situation be, if deserted, than mine is, as her perpetual companion! The very thought makes my heart bleed. Yes! amiable, devoted, dearest Afy, I throw aside these morbid feelings — you shall never repent having placed your trust in me. I will be proud and happy of such a friend, and you shall be mine for ever!"

A shriek broke on the air: he started. It was near: he hastened after the sound. He entered into a small green glade surrounded by shrubs, where had been erected a fanciful hermitage. There he found Sir Lucius Grafton on his knees, grasping the hand of the indignant but terrified May Dacre. The Duke rushed forward; Miss Dacre ran to meet him; the Baronet rose.

"This lady, Sir Lucius Grafton, is under my protection," said the young Duke, with a

flashing eye but a calm voice. She clung to his arm; he bore her away. The whole was the affair of an instant.

The Duke and his companion proceeded in silence. She tried to hasten, but he felt her limbs shake upon his arm. He stopped: — no one, not even a servant, was near. He could not leave her for an instant. There she stood trembling, her head bent down, and one hand clasping the other which rested on his arm. Terrible was her struggle, but she would not faint, and at length succeeded in repressing her emotions. They were yet a considerable way from the house. She motioned with her left hand to advance; but still she did not speak. On they walked, though more slowly, for she was exhausted, and occasionally stopped for breath, or strength.

At length she said, in a faint voice, — "I cannot join the party. I must go home directly. How can it be done?"

"Your companions," said the Duke —

"Are of course engaged, or not to be found; but surely, somebody, I know, is departing. Manage it — manage it: say I am ill."

"Oh! Miss Dacre, if you knew the agony of my mind!"

"Do not speak — for Heaven's sake, do not speak!"

He turned off from the lawn, and approached by a small circuit the gate of the ground. Suddenly, he perceived a carriage on the point of going off. It was the Duchess of Shropshire's.

"There is the Duchess of Shropshire! You know her — but not a minute is to be lost. There is such a noise, they will not hear. Are you afraid to stop here one instant by yourself? I shall not be out of sight, and not away a second. I run very quick."

"No — no, I am not afraid. Go — go!"

Away rushed the Duke of St. James, as if his life were on his speed. He stopped the carriage, spoke, and was back in an instant.

"Lean — lean on me with all your strength. I have told every thing necessary to Lady Shropshire. Nobody will speak a word, because they believe you have a terrible headache. I will say every thing necessary to Mrs. Dallington and your cousin. Do not give yourself a moment's uneasiness. And, oh! Miss Dacre, if I might say one word!"

She did not stop him.

"If," continued he, "it be your wish, that the outrage of to-night should be known only to myself and him, I pledge my word it shall be so; though willingly, if I were authorized, I would act a different part in this affair."

"It is my wish." She spoke in a low voice, with her eyes still upon the ground — "And I thank you for this, and for all."

They had now joined the Shropshires; but it was now discovered Miss Dacre had no shawl; and sundry other articles were wanting, to the evident dismay of the Ladies Wrekin. They offered theirs, but their visitor refused, and

would not allow the Duke to fetch her own. Off they drove; but when they had proceeded above half a mile, a continued shout on the road, which the fat coachman, for a long time, would not hear, stopped them, and up came the Duke of St. James, covered with dust, and panting like a racer, with Miss Dacre's shawl.

CHAPTER XII.

So much time was occupied by this adventure of the shawl, and by making requisite explanations to Mrs. Dallington Vere, that almost the whole of the guests had retired, when the Duke found himself again in the saloon. His brother-hosts, too, were off with various parties, to which they had attached themselves. He found the Fitz-pompeys, and a few still lingering for their carriages; and Arundel Dacre and his fair admirer. His Grace had promised to return with Lady Afy, and was devising some scheme by which he might free himself from this, now not very suitable, engagement, when she claimed his arm. She was

leaning on it, and talking to Lady Fitz-pompey, when Sir Lucius approached, and, with his usual tone, put a note into the Duke's hand, saying at the same time,—" This appears to belong to you. I shall go to town with Piggott;"—and then he walked away.

With the wife leaning on his arm, the young Duke had the pleasure of reading the following lines, written with the pencil of the husband.

" AFTER what has just occurred, only one more meeting can take place between us, and the sooner that takes place, the better for all parties. This is no time for etiquette. I shall be in Kensington Gardens, in the grove on the right side of the summer-house, at half-past six to-morrow morning, and shall doubtless find you there."

Sir Lucius was not out of sight when the Duke had finished reading his cartel. Making some confused excuse to Lady Afy, which was

not expected, he ran after the Baronet, and soon reached him.

"Sir Lucius Grafton, I shall be punctual: but there is one point on which I wish to speak to you at once. The cause of this meeting may be kept, I hope, a secret!"

"As far as I am concerned, an inviolable one," bowed the Baronet very stiffly; and they parted.

The Duke returned satisfied, for Sir Lucius Grafton ever observed his word—to say nothing of the great interest which he surely had this time in maintaining his pledge.

Our hero thought that he never should reach London. The journey seemed a day; and the effort to amuse Lady Afy, and to prevent her from suspecting, by his conduct, that anything had occurred, was most painful. Silent, however, he at last became; but her mind, too, was engaged; and she supposed that her admirer was quiet only because, like herself, he was happy. At length they reached her house, but

he excused himself from entering, and drove on immediately to Annesley. He was at Lady Bloomerly's. Lord Darrell had not returned, and his servant did not expect him. Lord Squib was never to be found. The Duke put on a great coat over his uniform, and drove to White's: — it was really a wilderness. Never had he seen fewer men there in his life, and there were none of his set. The only young-looking man was old Colonel Carlisle, who, with his skilfully enamelled cheek, flowing auburn locks, shining teeth, and tinted whiskers, might have been mistaken for gay twenty-seven, instead of gray seventy-two; but the Colonel had the gout, to say nothing of any other objections.

The Duke took up the Courier, and read three or four advertisements of quack medicines—but nobody entered. It was nearly midnight: he got nervous. Somebody came in — Lord Hounslow for his rubber. Even his favoured child, Bagshot, would be better than nobody. The Duke protested that the next

acquaintance who entered should be his second, old or young. His vow had scarcely been registered, when Arundel Dacre came in alone. He was the last man to whom the Duke wished to address himself, but Fate seemed to have decided it, and the Duke walked up to him.

"Mr. Dacre, I am about to ask of you a favour to which I have no claim."

Mr. Dacre looked a little confused, and murmured his willingness to do any thing.

"To be explicit, I am engaged in an affair of honour of a very urgent nature. Will you be my friend?"

"With the greatest willingness." He spoke with more ease. "May I ask the name of the other party, —— the —— the cause of the meeting?"

"The other party is Sir Lucius Grafton."

"Hum!" said Arundel Dacre, as if he were no longer curious about the cause. "When do you meet?"

"At half-past six, in Kensington Gardens,

to-morrow,— I believe, I should say this morning."

"Your Grace must be wearied," said Arundel, with unusual ease and animation. "Now, follow my advice. Go home at once and get some rest. Give yourself no trouble about preparations: leave every thing to me. I will call upon you at half-past five precisely, with a chaise and post-horses, which will divert suspicion. Now, good night!"

"But really, your rest must be considered— and then all this trouble!"

"Oh! I have been in the habit of sitting up all night. Do not think of me,—nor am I quite inexperienced in these matters, in too many of which I have unfortunately been engaged in Germany."

The young men shook hands with great cordiality, and the Duke hastened home. Fortunately, the Bird of Paradise was at her own establishment in Baker Street, a bureau where her secretary, in her behalf, transacted business

with the various courts of Europe, and the numerous cities of Great Britain. Here many a negotiation was carried on for Opera engagements at Vienna, or Paris, or Berlin, or St. Petersburg. Here many a diplomatic correspondence conducted the fate of the musical festivals of York, or Norwich, or Exeter.

CHAPTER XIII.

LET us return to Sir Lucius Grafton. He is as mad as any man must be, who feels that the imprudence of a moment has dashed to the ground all the plans, and all the hopes, and all the great results, over which he had so often pondered. The great day from which he had expected so much had passed, nor was it possible for four-and-twenty hours more completely to have reversed all his feelings and all his prospects. May Dacre had shared the innocent but unusual and excessive gaiety, which had properly become a scene of festivity at once so agreeable, so various, and so novel. Sir Lucius Grafton had not been insensible to the

excitement. On the contrary, his impetuous passions seemed to recall the former, and more fervent, days of his career, and his voluptuous mind dangerously sympathised with the beautiful and luxurious scene. He was elated too with the thought, that his freedom would perhaps be sealed this evening, and still more by his almost constant attendance on his fascinating companion. As the particular friend of the Dacre family, and as the secret ally of Mrs. Dallington Vere, he in some manner contrived always to be at May Dacre's side. With the laughing but insidious pretence, that he was now almost too grave and staid a personage for such scenes, he conversed with few others, and humorously maintaining, that his "dancing days were over," danced with none but her. Even when her attention was engaged by a third person, he lingered about, and with his consummate knowledge of the world, easy wit, and constant resources, generally succeeded in not only sliding into the conversation, but

engrossing it. Arundel Dacre too, although that young gentleman had not departed from his usual coldness in favour of Sir Lucius Grafton, the Baronet would most provokingly consider as his particular friend: never seemed to be conscious that his reserved companion was most punctilious in his address to him, but on the contrary called him in return "Dacre," and sometimes "Arundel." In vain young Dacre struggled to maintain his position. His manner was no match for that of Sir Lucius Grafton. Annoyed with himself, he felt confused, and often quitted his cousin, that he might be free of his friend. Thus, Sir Lucius Grafton contrived never to permit Miss Dacre to be alone with Arundel, and to her he was so courteous, so agreeable, and so useful, that his absence seemed always a blank, or a period in which something ever went wrong.

The triumphant day rolled on, and each moment Sir Lucius felt more sanguine and more excited. We will not dwell upon the advanc-

ing confidence of his desperate mind. Hope expanded into certainty,—certainty burst into impatience. In a desperate moment, he breathed his passion.

May Dacre was the last girl to feel at a loss in such a situation. No one would have rung him out of a saloon with an air of more contemptuous majesty. But the shock,—the solitary strangeness of the scene,—the fear, for the first time, that none were near, and perhaps, also, her exhausted energy, frightened her, and she shrieked. One only had heard that shriek, yet that one was Legion. Sooner might the whole world know the worst, than this person suspect the least. Sir Lucius was left silent with rage, mad with passion, desperate with hate.

He gasped for breath. Now his brow burnt,—now the cold dew ran off his countenance in streams. He clenched his fist,—he stamped with agony,—he found at length his voice, and he blasphemed to the unconscious winds.

His quick brain flew to the results like light-

ning. The Duke had escaped from his mesh; his madness had done more to win this boy May Dacre's heart, than an age of courtship. He had lost the idol of his passion, he was fixed for ever with the creature of his hate. He loathed the idea. He tottered into the hermitage, and buried his face in his hands.

Something must be done. Some monstrous act of energy must repair this fatal blunder. He appealed to the mind which had never deserted him. The oracle was mute. Yet vengeance might even slightly redeem the bitterness of despair. This fellow should die; and his girl—for already he hated May Dacre—should not triumph in her minion. He tore a leaf from his tablets, and wrote the lines we have already read.

The young Duke reached home. You expect, of course, that he sat up all night making his will, and answering letters. By no means. The first object that caught his eye was an enormous Ottoman. He threw himself upon it

without undressing, and without speaking a word to Luigi, and in a moment was fast asleep. He was fairly exhausted. Luigi stared, and called Spiridion to consult. They agreed that they dare not go to bed, and must not leave their lord; so they played *Ecarté*, till at last they quarrelled and fought with the candles over the table. But even this did not wake their unreasonable master; so Spiridion threw down a few chairs by accident; but all in vain. At half-past five, there was a knocking at the gate, and they hurried away.

Arundel Dacre entered with them, woke the Duke, and praised him for his punctuality. His Grace thought that he had only dozed a few minutes; but time pressed; five minutes arranged his toilette, and they were first on the field.

In a moment, Sir Lucius and Mr. Piggott appeared. Arundel Dacre, on the way, had anxiously enquired as to the probability of reconciliation, but was told at once it was im-

possible, so now he measured the ground and loaded the pistols with a calmness which was admirable. They fired at once; the Duke in the air, and the Baronet in his friend's side. When Sir Lucius saw his Grace fall, his hate vanished. He ran up with real anxiety and unfeigned anguish.

"Have I hit you, by H—ll!"

His Grace was of course magnanimous, but the case was urgent. A surgeon gave a favourable report, and extracted the ball on the spot. The Duke was carried back to his chaise, and in an hour was in the state bed, not of the Alhambra—but of his neglected mansion.

Arundel Dacre retired when he had seen his friend home, but gave urgent commands that he should be kept quiet. No sooner was the second out of sight, than the principal ordered the room to be cleared with the exception of Spiridion, and then, rising in his bed, wrote this note, which the page was secretly to deliver.

"—— House, ——, 182–.

"DEAR MISS DACRE,

"A VERY unimportant but somewhat disagreeable incident has occurred. I have been obliged to meet Sir Lucius Grafton, and our meeting has fortunately terminated without any serious consequences. Yet I wish that you should hear of this first from me, lest you might imagine that I had not redeemed my pledge of last night, and that I had placed for a moment my own feelings in competition with yours. This is not the case, and never shall be, dear Miss Dacre, with one whose greatest pride is to subscribe himself

"Your most obedient and faithful servant,

"ST. JAMES."

CHAPTER XIV.

The world talked of nothing but the duel between the Duke of St. James and Sir Lucius Grafton. It was a thunderbolt; and the phenomenon was accounted for by every cause but the right one. Yet even those who most confidently solved the riddle were the most eagerly employed in investigating its true meaning. The seconds were of course applied to. Arundel Dacre was proverbially unpumpable; but Peacock Piggott, whose communicative temper was an adage, how came he on a sudden so diplomatic? Not a syllable oozed from a mouth which was ever open; not a hint from a countenance which never could conceal its mind.

He was not even mysterious, but really looked just as astonished, and was just as curious as themselves. Fine times these for "The Universe," and "The New World!" All came out about Lady Afy; and they made up for their long and previous ignorance, or, as they now boldly blustered, their long and considerate forbearance. Sheets given away gratis,—edition on Saturday night for the country, and woodcuts of the Pavilion Fête:—the when, the how, and the wherefore. A. The summer house, and Lady Aphrodite meeting the young Duke. B. The hedge behind which Sir Lucius Grafton was concealed. C. Kensington Gardens, and a cloudy morning; and so on. Cruikshank did wonders.

But let us endeavour to ascertain the feelings of the principal agents in this odd affair. Sir Lucius now was cool, and the mischief being done, took a calm review of the late mad hours. As was his custom, he began to enquire whether any good could be elicited from all

evil. He owed his late adversary sundry monies, which he had never contemplated the possibility of repaying to the person who had eloped with his wife. Had he shot his creditor, the account would equally have been cleared; and this consideration, although it did not prompt, had not dissuaded, the late desperate deed. As it was, he now appeared still to enjoy the possession both of his wife and his debts, and had lost his friend. Bad generalship, Sir Lucy! Reconciliation was out of the question. The Duke's position was a good one. Strongly entrenched with a flesh wound, he had all the sympathy of society on his side; and after having been confined for a few weeks, he could go to Paris for a few months, and then return, as if the Graftons had never crossed his eye, rid of a troublesome mistress and a troublesome friend. His position was certainly a good one, but Sir Lucius was astute, and he determined to turn this Shumla of his Grace. The quarrel must have been about her Ladyship.

"Who could assign any other cause for it? And the Duke must now be weak with loss of blood and anxiety, and totally unable to resist any appeal, particularly a personal one, to his feelings. He determined therefore to drive Lady Afy into his Grace's arms. If he could only get her into the house for an hour, the business would be settled.

These cunning plans were, however, nearly being crossed by a very simple incident. Annoyed at finding that her feelings could be consulted only by sacrificing those of another woman, May Dacre, quite confident that as Lady Aphrodite was innocent in the present instance, she must be immaculate, told every thing to her father, and stifling her tears, begged him to make all public; but Mr. Dacre, after due consideration, enjoined silence.

In the mean time, the young Duke was not in so calm a mood as the Baronet. Rapidly the late extraordinary events dashed through his mind, and already those feelings which had

prompted his soliloquy in the garden, were no longer his. All forms, all images, all ideas, all memory, melted into May Dacre. He felt that he loved her with a perfect love; that she was to him what no other woman had been, even in the factitious delirium of early passion. A thought of her seemed to bring an entirely novel train of feelings, impressions, wishes, hopes. The world with her must be a totally different system, and his existence in her society, a new and another life. Her very purity refined the passion which raged even in his exhausted mind. Gleams of virtue, morning streaks of duty, broke upon the horizon of his hitherto clouded soul; an obscure suspicion of the utter worthlessness of his life whispered in his hollow ear; he darkly felt that happiness was too philosophical a system to be the result, or the reward, of impulse, however unbounded, and that principle alone could create, and could support, that bliss which is our being's end and aim.

But when he turned to himself, he viewed his situation with horror, and yielded almost to despair. What — what could she think of the impure libertine who dared to adore her? If ever time could bleach his own soul, and conciliate hers, what — what was to become of Aphrodite? Was his new career to commence by a new crime? Was he to desert this creature of his affections, and break a heart which beat only for him? It seemed that the only compensation he could offer for a life which had achieved no good, would be to establish the felicity of the only being whose happiness seemed in his power. Yet what a prospect! If before he had trembled—now——

But his harrowed mind and exhausted body no longer allowed him even anxiety. Weak, yet excited, his senses fled; and when Arundel Dacre returned in the evening, he found his friend delirious. He sat by his bed for many hours. Suddenly, the Duke speaks. Arundel Dacre rises:—he leans over the sufferer's couch.

Ah! why turns the face of the listener so pale — and why gleam those eyes with terrible fire? The perspiration courses down his clear but sallow cheek: he throws his dark and clustering curls aside, and passes his hand over his damp brow, as if to ask whether he, too, had lost his senses from this fray.

The Duke is agitated. He waves his arm in the air, and calls out, in a tone of defiance and of hate. His voice sinks: it seems that he breathes a milder language, and speaks to some softer being. There is no sound, save the long-drawn breath of one on whose countenance is stamped infinite amazement. Arundel Dacre walks the room disturbed; often he pauses, plunged in deep thought. 'Tis an hour past midnight, and he quits the bedside of the young Duke.

He pauses at the threshold, and seems to respire even the noisome air of the metropolis, as if it were Eden. As he proceeds down Hill Street, he stops, and gazes for a moment on

the opposite house. What passes in his mind we know not. Perhaps he is reminded that in that mansion dwell beauty, wealth, and influence — and that all might be his. Perhaps love prompts that gaze — perhaps ambition. Is it passion, or is it power? or does one struggle with the other?

As he gazes, the door opens, but without servants; and a man, deeply shrouded in his cloak, comes out. It was night, and the individual was disguised; but there are eyes which can pierce at all seasons, and through all concealments, — and Arundel Dacre marked with astonishment Sir Lucius Grafton.

CHAPTER XV.

When it was understood that the Duke of St. James had been delirious, public feeling reached what is called its height; that is to say, the curiosity and the ignorance of the world were about equal. Every body was indignant, — not so much because the young Duke had been shot, but because they did not know why. If the sympathy of the women could have consoled him, our hero might have been reconciled to his fate. Among these, no one appeared more anxious as to the result, and more ignorant as to the cause, than Mrs. Dallington Vere. Arundel Dacre called on her the morning ensuing his midnight observation,

but understood, that she had not seen Sir Lucius Grafton, who, they said, had quitted London, which she thought probable. Nevertheless, Arundel thought proper to walk down Hill Street at the same hour, and, if not at the same minute, yet, in due course of time, he discovered the absent Baronet.

In two or three days, the young Duke was declared out of immediate danger, though his attendants must say, he remained exceedingly restless, and by no means in a satisfactory state; yet, with their aid, they had a right to hope the best. At any rate, if he were to go off, his friends would have the satisfaction of remembering, that all had been done that could be: so saying, Dr. X. took his fee, and Surgeons Y. and Z. prevented his conduct from being singular.

Now began the operations on the Grafton side. A letter from Lady Aphrodite full of distraction. She was fairly mystified. What could have induced Lucy suddenly to act so,

puzzled her, as well it might. Her despair, and yet her confidence in his Grace, seemed equally great. Some talk there was of going off to Cleve at once. Her husband, on the whole, maintained a rigid silence and studied coolness. Yet he had talked of Vienna and Florence, and even murmured something about public disgrace and public ridicule. In short, the poor lady was fairly worn out, and wished to terminate her harassing career at once, by cutting the Gordian knot. In a word, she proposed coming on to her admirer, and, as she supposed, her victim; and having the satisfaction of giving him his cooling draughts, and arranging his bandages.

If the meeting between the young Duke and Sir Lucius Grafton had been occasioned by any other cause than the real one, I cannot say what might have been the fate of this proposition. My own opinion is, that this work would have been in two volumes; for the requisite morality would have made out the present

one; but, as it was, the image of May Dacre hovered above our hero as his guardian genius. He despaired of ever obtaining her; but yet he determined not wilfully to crush all hope. Some great effort must be made, to right his position. Lady Aphrodite must not be deserted: — the very thought increased his fever. He wrote, to gain time; but another billet, in immediate answer, only painted increased terrors, and described the growing urgency of her persecuted situation. He was driven into a corner — but even a stag at bay is awful: — what, then, must be a young Duke, the most noble animal in existence?

Ill as he was, he wrote these lines, not to Lady Aphrodite, but to—her husband: —

"MY DEAR GRAFTON,

"YOU will be surprised at hearing from me. I trust you will not be displeased. Is it necessary for me to assure you, that my interference on a late occasion was quite accidental? And

can you, for a moment maintain that, under the circumstances, I could have acted in a different manner? I regret the whole unhappy business; but most I regret that we were placed in collision.

"I am ready to cast all memory of it into oblivion; and as I most unintentionally offended, I indulge the sweet hope, that, in this conduct, you will bear me company.

"Surely, men like us are not to be dissuaded from following our inclinations by any fear of the opinion of the world. The whole affair is, at present, a mystery; and I think, with our united fancies, same explanation may be hit upon, which will render the mystery quite impenetrable, while it professes to offer a satisfactory solution.

"I do not know whether this letter expresses my meaning, for my mind is somewhat agitated, and my head not very clear; but if you be inclined to understand it in the right spirit, it is sufficiently lucid. At any rate, my dear Graf-

ton, I have once more the pleasure of subscribing myself, faithfully yours,

ST. JAMES."

This letter was marked "immediate," consigned to the custody of Luigi, with positive orders to deliver it personally to Sir Lucius; and if not at home, to follow till he found him.

He was not at home, and he was found at ——'s Club House. Sullen, dissatisfied with himself, doubtful as to the result of his fresh manœuvres, and brooding over his infernal debts, Sir Lucius had stepped into ——, and passed the whole morning gaming desperately with Lord Hounslow and Baron de Berghen. Never had he experienced such a smashing morning. He had long far exceeded his banker's account, and was proceeding with a vague idea that he should find money somehow or other, when this note was put into his hand, as it seemed to him by Providence. The signature of Semiramis could not have imparted

more exquisite delight to the mysterious Mr. Upcott, or lucid Dawson Turner, whose letter is not forgotten among the Apennines. (1) Were his long views, his complicated objects, and doubtful results to be put in competition, a moment, with so decided, so simple, and so certain a benefit? — certainly not, by a gamester. He rose from the table, and with strange elation wrote these lines:—

"MY DEAREST FRIEND,

"YOU forgive me,—but can I forgive myself! I am plunged in the most overwhelming grief. Shall I come on? Your mad but devoted friend,

LUCIUS GRAFTON."

"The Duke of St. James,"
&c. &c. &c.

They met the same day. After a long consultation, it was settled that Peacock Piggott should be entrusted, in confidence, with the secret of the affair — merely a drunken squab-

ble, "growing out" of the Bird of Paradise. Wine, jealousy, an artful woman, and head-strong youth, will account for any thing—they accounted for the present affair. The story was believed, because the world were always puzzled at Lady Aphrodite being the cause. The Baronet proceeded with promptitude to make the version pass current: he indicted "The Universe," and "The New World;" he prosecuted the caricaturists; and was seen everywhere with his wife. "The Universe" and "The New World" revenged themselves on the Signora; and then she indicted them. They could not now even libel an Opera singer with impunity:—where was the boasted liberty of the Press?

In the mean time, the young Duke, once more easy in his mind, wonderfully recovered; and on the eighth day after the Ball of Beauty, he returned to the Pavilion, which had now resumed its usual calm character, for fresh air and soothing quiet.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the morning of the young Duke's departure for Twickenham, as Miss Dacre and Lady Caroline St. Maurice were sitting together at the house of the former, and moralizing over the last night's ball, Mr. Arundel Dacre was announced.

"You have just arrived in time to offer your congratulations, Arundel, on an agreeable event," said Miss Dacre. "Lord St. Maurice is about to lead to the hymeneal altar——"

"Lady Sophy Wrekin—I know it."

"How extremely diplomatic! The *attaché* in your very air. I thought of course I was

to surprise you,—but future ambassadors have such extraordinary sources of information."

"Mine is a very simple one. The Duchess imagining, I suppose, that my attentions were directed to the wrong lady, warned me some weeks past. However, my congratulations shall be duly paid. Lady Caroline St. Maurice, allow me to express——"

"All that you ought to feel," said Miss Dacre. "But men at the present day pride themselves on insensibility."

"Do you think I am insensible, Lady Caroline?" asked Arundel.

"I must protest against unfair questions," said her Ladyship.

"But it is not unfair. You are a person who have now seen me more than once, and therefore, according to May, you ought to have a perfect knowledge of my character. Moreover, you do not share the prejudices of my family. I ask you, then, do you think I am so heartless as May would insinuate?"

"Does she insinuate so much?"

"Does she not call me insensible, because I am not in raptures that your brother is about to marry a young lady, who, for aught she knows, may be the object of my secret adoration?"

"Arundel, you are perverse," said Miss Dacre.

"No, May, I am logical."

"I have always heard that logic is much worse than wilfulness," said Lady Caroline.

"But Arundel always was both," said Miss Dacre. "He is not only unreasonable, but he will always prove that he is right. Here is your purse, Sir!" she added, with a smile, presenting him with the result of her week's labour.

"This is the way she always bribes me, Lady Caroline. Do you approve of this corruption?"

"I must confess, I have a slight though secret kindness for a little bribery. Mamma

is now on her way to Mortimer's, on a very corrupt embassy. The *nouvelle Mariée*, you know, must be reconciled to her change of lot by quite a new set of playthings. I can give you no idea of the necklace that our magnificent cousin, in spite of his wound, has sent Sophy."

"But then such a cousin!" said Miss Dacre. "A young Duke, like the young lady in the Fairy Tale, should scarcely ever speak without producing brilliants."

"Sophy is highly sensible of the attention. As she amusingly observed, except himself marrying her, he could scarcely do more. I hear the carriage. Adieu, love! Good morning, Mr. Dacre."

"Allow me to see you to your carriage. I am to dine at Fitz-pompey House to-day, I believe."

Arundel Dacre returned to his cousin, and seating himself at the table, took up a book, and began reading it the wrong side upwards;

then he threw down a ball of silk, then he cracked a netting needle, and then with a husky sort of voice, and a half blush, and altogether an air of infinite confusion, he said, "This has been an odd affair, May, of the Duke of St. James and Sir Lucius Grafton?"

"A very distressing affair, Arundel."

"How singular that I should have been his second, May!"

"Could he have found any one more fit for that office, Arundel?"

"I think he might. I must say this; that had I known at the time the cause of the fray, I should have refused to attend him."

She was silent, and he resumed.

"An Opera singer at the best! Sir Lucius Grafton showed more discrimination. Peacock Piggott was just the character for his place, and I think my principal, too, might have found a more congenial sprite. What do you think, May?"

"Really, Arundel, this is a subject of which I know nothing."

"Indeed! Well, it is very odd, May; but, do you know? I have a queer suspicion that you know more about it than any body else."

"I! Arundel?" she exclaimed, with marked confusion.

"Yes, *you*, May," he repeated with great firmness, and looked her in the face with a glance which would read her soul. "Ay! I am sure you do."

"Who says so?"

"Oh! do not fear that you have been betrayed. No one says it; but I know it. We future ambassadors, you know, have such extraordinary sources of information."

"You jest, Arundel, on a grave subject."

"Grave!—yes, it is grave, May Dacre. It is grave, that there should be secrets between us; it is grave, that our house should have been insulted; it is grave, that you, of all others, should have been outraged; but oh! it is much

more grave, it is bitter, that any other arm, than this, should have avenged the wrong." He rose from his chair, he paced the room in fearful agitation, and gnashed his teeth with an expression of vindictive hate, that he tried not to suppress.

"Oh! my cousin, my dear, dear cousin! spare me, spare me!" She hid her face in her hands, yet she continued speaking in a broken voice, "I did it for the best. It was to suppress strife, to prevent bloodshed. I knew your temper, and I feared for your life—yet I told my father, I told him all; and it was by his advice that I have maintained throughout the silence which I, perhaps too hastily, at first adopted."

"My own dearest May! spare *me*, spare *me*. I cannot mark a tear from you without a pang. How I came to know this, you wonder. It was the delirium of that person who should not have played so proud a part in this affair, and who is yet our friend; it was his delirium that

betrayed all. In the madness of his excited brain, he re-acted the frightful scene, declared the outrage, and again avenged it. Yet, believe me, I am not tempted by any petty feeling, of showing I am not ignorant of what is considered a secret, to declare all this. I know, I feel your silence was for the best,—that it was prompted by sweet and holy feelings for my sake. Believe me, my dear cousin, if any thing could increase the infinite affection with which I love you, it would be the consciousness, that at all times, whenever my image crosses your mind, it is to muse for my benefit, or to extenuate my errors.

"Dear May, you, who know me better than the world, know well my heart is not a mass of ice; and you, who are ever so ready to find a good reason, even for my most wilful conduct, and an excuse for my most irrational, will easily credit, that in interfering in an affair in which you are concerned, I am not influenced by an unworthy, an officious, or a meddling spirit.

No, my own May! it is because I think it better for you that we should speak upon this subject, that I have ventured to treat upon it. Perhaps I broke it in a crude, but, credit me, not in an unkind spirit. I am well conscious I have a somewhat ungracious manner; but you, who have pardoned it so often, will excuse it now. To be brief, it is of your companion to that accursed *fête* that I would speak."

"Mrs. Dallington?"

"Surely she. Avoid her, May. I do not like that woman. You know, I seldom speak at hazard: if I do not speak more distinctly now, it is because I will never magnify suspicions into certainties, which we must do even if we mention them. But I suspect—greatly suspect. An open rupture would be disagreeable—would be unwarrantable—would be impolitic. The season draws to a close. Quit town somewhat earlier than usual, and, in the mean time, receive her, if necessary—but, if possible, never alone. You have many friends; and, if

no other, Lady Caroline St. Maurice is worthy of your society."

He bent down his head, and kissed her forehead: she pressed his faithful hand.

"And now, dear May, let me speak of a less important object, — of myself. I find this borough a mere delusion. Every day new difficulties arise; and every day my chance seems weaker. I am wasting precious time, for one who should be in action. I think, then, of returning to Vienna, and at once. I have some chance of being appointed Secretary of Legation, and I then shall have achieved what was the great object of my life—independence."

"This is always a sorrowful subject to me, Arundel. You have cherished such strange—do not be offended, if I say, such erroneous ideas, on the subject of what you call Independence, that I feel that, upon it, we can consult neither with profit to you, nor satisfaction to myself. Independence! Who is independent, if the heir of Dacre bow to any one?

Independence! Who can be independent, if the future head of one of the first families in this great country will condescend to be the secretary even of a King?"

"We have often talked of this, May, and perhaps I have carried a morbid feeling to some excess; but my paternal blood flows in these veins, and it is too late to change. I know not how it is, but I seem misplaced in life. My existence is a long blunder."

"Too late to change, dearest Arundel! Oh! thank you for those words. Can it, can it ever be too late to acknowledge error? Particularly if, by that very acknowledgment, we not only secure our own happiness, but that of those we love, and those who love us."

"Dear May! when I talk with you, I talk with my good genius; but I am in closer and more constant converse with another mind, and of that I am the slave. It is my own. I will not conceal from you, from whom I have concealed nothing, that doubts and dark misgivings

of the truth and wisdom of my past feelings, and my past career, will ever and anon flit across my fancy, and obtrude themselves upon my consciousness. Your father——yes! I feel that I have not been to him what nature intended, and what he deserved."

"Oh, Arundel!" she said with streaming eyes, "he loves you like a son. Yet, yet, be one!"

He seated himself on the sofa by her side, and took her small hand, and bathed it with his kisses

"My sweet and faithful friend—my very sister. I am overpowered with feelings to which I have hitherto been a stranger. There is a cause for all this contest of my passions. It must out. My being has changed. The scales have fallen from my sealed eyes, and the fountain of my heart o'erflows. Life seems to have a new purpose, and existence a new cause. Listen to me, listen; and if you can, May, comfort me!"

CHAPTER XVII.

At Twickenham, the young Duke recovered rapidly. Not altogether displeased with his recent conduct, his self-complacency assisted his convalescence. Sir Lucius Grafton visited him daily. Regularly, about four or five o'clock, he galloped down to the Pavilion, with the last *on dit:* some gay message from the bow-window, a *mot* of Lord Squib, or a trait of Charles Annesley. But while he studied to amuse the wearisome hours of his imprisoned friend, in the midst of all his gaiety, an interesting contrition was ever breaking forth; not so much by words as looks. It was evident that Sir Lucius, although he dis-

sembled his affliction, was seriously affected by the consequence of his rash passion; and his amiable victim, whose magnanimous mind was incapable of harbouring an inimical feeling, and ever responded to a soft and generous sentiment, felt actually more aggrieved for his unhappy friend, than for himself. Of Arundel Dacre, the Duke had not seen much. That gentleman never particularly sympathized with Sir Lucius Grafton, and now he scarcely endeavoured to conceal the little pleasure which he received from the Baronet's society. Sir Lucius was the last man not to detect this mood; but as he was confident that the Duke had not betrayed him, he could only suppose that Miss Dacre had confided the affair to her family, and therefore under all circumstances, he thought it best to be unconscious of any alteration in Arundel Dacre's intercourse with him. Civil, therefore, they were when they met; the Baronet was even courteous; but they both mutually avoided each other.

At the end of three weeks, the Duke of St. James returned to town in perfect condition, and received the congratulations of his friends. Mr. Dacre had been of the few who had been permitted to visit him at Twickenham. Nothing had then passed between them on the cause of his illness; but his Grace could not but observe, that the manner of his valued friend was more than commonly cordial. And Miss Dacre, with her father, was among the first to hail his return to health and the metropolis.

The Bird of Paradise, who, since the incident, had been several times in hysterics, and had written various notes, of three or four lines each, of enquiries and entreaties to join her noble friend, had been kept off from Twickenham by the masterly tactics of Lord Squib. She however would drive to the Duke's house the day after his arrival in town, and was with him when sundry loud knocks, in quick succession, announced an approaching levee. He locked her

up in his private room, and hastened to receive the compliments of his visitors. In the same apartment, among many others, he had the pleasure of meeting, for the first time, Lady Aphrodite Grafton, Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and Miss Dacre, all women whom he had either promised, intended, or offered to marry. A curious situation this! And really, when our hero looked upon them once more, and viewed them, in delightful rivalry, advancing with their congratulations, he was not surprised at the feelings with which they had inspired him. Far, far exceeding the *bonhommie* of Macheath, the Duke could not resist remembering, that had it been his fortune to have lived in the land in which his historiographer will soon be wandering; in short, to have been a Pacha instead of a Peer, he might have married all three.

A prettier fellow, and three prettier women, had never met since the immortal incident of Ida.

It required the thorough breeding of Lady

Afy to conceal the anxiety of her passion; May Dacre's eyes showered triple sunshine, as she extended a hand not too often offered; but Lady Caroline was a cousin, and consanguinity, therefore, authorized as well as accounted for the warmth of her greeting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VERY few days after his return, the Duke of St. James dined with Mr. Dacre. It was the first time that he had dined with him during the season. The Fitz-pompeys were there; and among others, his Grace had the pleasure of again meeting a few of his Yorkshire friends.

Once more, he found himself at the right-hand of May Dacre. All his career, since his arrival in England, flitted across his mind. Doncaster, dear Doncaster, where he had first seen her, teemed only with delightful reminiscences to a man whose favourite had bolted. Such is the magic of love! Then came Castle Dacre and the Orange Terrace, and their ele-

gant romps, and the delightful party to Hauteville; and then, Dacre Abbey. An involuntary shudder seemed to damp all the ardour of his soul; but when he turned and looked upon her beaming face, he could not feel miserable.

He thought that he had never been at so agreeable a party in his life: yet it was chiefly composed of the very beings whom he daily execrated for their powers of boredom. And he himself was not very entertaining. He was certainly more silent than loquacious, and found himself very often gazing with mute admiration on the little mouth, every word breathed forth from which seemed inspiration. Yet he was happy. Oh! what happiness is his, who dotes upon a woman! Few could observe from his conduct what was passing in his mind; yet the quivering of his softened tones, and the mild lustre of his mellowed gaze; his subdued and quiet manner; his unperceived yet infinite attentions; his memory of little incidents, that all but lovers would

have forgotten; the total absence of all compliment, and gallantry, and repartee—all these, to a fine observer, might have been gentle indications of a strong passion; and to her to whom they were addressed, sufficiently intimated, that no change had taken place in his feelings, since the warm hour in which he first whispered his o'erpowering love.

The ladies retired, and the Duke of St. James fell into a reverie. A political discourse of the most elaborate genius now arose. Lord Fitz-pompey got parliamentary. Young Faulcon made his escape, having previously whispered to another youth, not unheard by the Duke of St. James, that his mother was about to depart, and he was convoy. His Grace, too, had heard Lady Fitz-pompey say, that she was going early to the Opera. Shortly afterwards, parties evidently retired. But the debate still raged. Lord Fitz-pompey had caught a stout Yorkshire squire, and was delightedly astounding, with official graces, his stern opponent A

sudden thought occurred to the Duke; he stole out of the room, and gained the saloon.

He found it almost empty. With sincere pleasure, he bid Lady Balmont, who was on the point of departure, farewell, and promised to look in at her box. He seated himself by Lady Greville Nugent, and dexterously made her follow Lady Balmont's example. She withdrew with the conviction, that his Grace would not be a moment behind her. There was only old Mrs. Hungerford and her rich daughter remaining. They were in such raptures with Miss Dacre's singing, that his Grace was quite in despair; but chance favoured him. Even old Mrs. Hungerford this night broke through her rule of not going to more than one house, and she drove off to Lady de Courcy's.

They were alone. It is sometimes an awful thing to be alone with those we love.

"Sing that again!" asked the Duke, imploring. "It is my favourite air; it always reminds me of Dacre."

She sang, she ceased; she sang with beauty, and she ceased with grace; but all unnoticed by the tumultuous soul of her adoring guest. His thoughts were intent upon a greater object. The opportunity was sweet; and yet those boisterous wassailers, they might spoil all.

"Do you know that this is the first time that I have seen your rooms lit up?" said the Duke.

"Is it possible! I hope they gain the approbation of so distinguished a judge."

"I admire them exceedingly. By the by, I see a new cabinet in the next room. Swaby told me the other day, that you were one of his lady patronesses. I wish you would show it me. I am very curious in cabinets."

She rose, and they advanced to the end of another and a longer room.

"This is a beautiful saloon," said the Duke. "How long is it?"

"I really do not know; but I think, between forty and fifty feet."

"Oh! you must be mistaken. Forty or fifty feet. I am an excellent judge of distances. I will try. Forty or fifty feet. Ah! the third room included. Let us walk to the end of the next room. Each of my paces shall be one foot and half."

They had now arrived at the end of the third room.

"Let me see," resumed the Duke; "you have a small room to the right. Oh! did I not hear that you had made a conservatory? I see—I see it—lit up too! Let us go in. I want to gain some hints about London conservatories."

It was not exactly a conservatory, but a balcony of large dimensions had been fitted up on each side with coloured glass, and was open to the gardens. It was a rich night of fragrant June. The moon and stars were as bright as if they had shone over the terrace of Dacre, and the perfume of the flowers reminded him of his favourite orange-trees. The mild, cool

scene was such a contrast to the hot and noisy chamber they had recently quitted, that for a moment they were silent.

"You are not afraid of this delicious air?" asked his Grace.

"Midsummer air," said Miss Dacre, "must surely be harmless."

Again there was silence; and Miss Dacre, after having plucked a flower and tended a plant, seemed to express an intention of withdrawing. Suddenly he spoke, and in a gushing voice of heartfelt words.

"Miss Dacre, you are too kind, too excellent to be offended, if I dare to ask whether anything could induce you to view with more indulgence one who sensibly feels how utterly he is unworthy of you?"

"My Lord, you are the last man whose feelings I should wish to hurt. Let us not revive a conversation to which, I can assure you, neither of us looks back with satisfaction."

"Is there then no hope? Must I ever live

with the consciousness of being the object of your scorn?"

"Oh! no, no! My Lord, as you will speak, let us understand each other. However I may approve of my decision, I have lived quite long enough to repent the manner in which it was conveyed. I cannot, without the most unfeigned regret—I cannot for a moment, remember, that I have addressed a bitter word to one to whom I am under the greatest obligations. If my apologies—"

"Pray, pray be silent!"

"I must speak. If my apologies, my most complete, my most humble apologies can be any compensation for treating with such lightness feelings which I now respect, and offers by which I now consider myself honoured,—accept them!"

"Oh! Miss Dacre, that fatal word—respect!"

"My Lord, we have warmer words in this house for you. You are now our friend."

"I dare not urge a suit which may offend you; yet if you could read my heart, I sometimes think that we might be happy. Let me hope!"

"My dear Duke of St. James, I am sure you will not ever offend me, because I am sure you will not ever wish to do it. There are few people in this world for whom I entertain a more sincere regard than yourself. I am convinced, I am conscious, that when we met, I did sufficient justice neither to your virtues nor your talents. It is impossible for me to express with what satisfaction I now feel, that you have resumed that place in the affections of this family to which you have an hereditary right. I am grateful, truly, sincerely grateful for all that you feel with regard to me individually; and believe me, in again expressing my regret that it is not in my power to view you in any other light than as a valued friend, I feel, that I am pursuing that conduct which will conduce as much to your happiness as my own."

"My *happiness*, Miss Dacre!"

"Indeed, such is my opinion. I will not again endeavour to depreciate the feelings which you entertain for me, and by which, ever remember, I feel honoured; but these very feelings prevent you from viewing their object as dispassionately as I do."

"I am at a loss for your meaning—at least, favour me by speaking explicitly:—you see, I respect your sentiments, and do not presume to urge that on which my very happiness depends."

"To be brief then, my Lord, I will not affect to conceal that marriage is a state which has often been the object of my meditations. I think it the duty of all women, that so important a change in their destiny should be well considered. If I know anything of myself, I am convinced that I should never survive an unhappy marriage."

"But why dream of anything so utterly impossible?"

"So very probable,—so very certain, you mean, my Lord. Ay! I repeat my words, for they are truth. If I ever marry, it is to devote every feeling, and every thought, each hour, each instant of existence, to a single being for whom I alone live. Such devotion I expect in return; without it, I should die, or wish to die; but such devotion can never be returned by you."

"You amaze me! I! who live only on your image."

"My Lord, your education, the habits [illegible] which you are brought up, the maxims which [illegible] instilled into you from your infancy, the system which each year of your life has more matured, the worldly levity with which every thing connected with woman is viewed by you and your companions; whatever may be your natural dispositions,—all this would prevent you—all this would render it a perfect impossibility,—all this will ever make you utterly unconscious of the importance of the subject

on which we are now conversing. My Lord, pardon me for saying it, you know not of what you speak. Yes! however sincere may be the expression of your feelings to me this moment, I shudder to think on whom your memory dwelt even this hour, but yesterday. I never will peril my happiness on such a chance; but there are others, my Lord, who do not think as I do."

"May Dacre! save me, save me! If you knew all, you would not doubt. This moment is my destiny."

"My Lord, save yourself. There is yet time. You have my prayers."

"Let me then hope——"

"Indeed, indeed, it cannot be. Here our conversation on this subject ends for ever."

"Yet we part friends!" He spoke in a broken voice.

"The best and truest!" She extended her arm; he pressed her hand to his impassioned

lips, and quitted the house, mad with love and misery.

This scene should have been touching; but I know not why, when I read it over, it seems to me a tissue of half-meanings. What I meant is stamped upon my brain, if indeed I have a brain; but I have lost the power of conveying what I feel, if indeed that power were ever mine. I write with an aching head and quivering hand; yet I must write, if but to break the solitude, which is to me a world quick with exciting life: I scribble to divert a brain, which, though weak, will struggle with strong thoughts, and lest my mind should muse itself to madness.

The mind is an essence, there is no doubt, and infinitely superior to the grosser body. Yet somehow that rebel will turn round upon its chief, and wonderfully mar our great careers. Mind is a fine thing, I won't deny it, and mine was once as full of pride and hope as infant empire. But where are now my deeds

and aspirations, and where the fame I dreamed of when a boy? I find the world just slipping through my fingers, and cannot grasp the jewel ere it falls. I quit an earth, where none will ever miss me, save those whose blood requires no laurels to make them love my memory. My life has been a blunder and a blank, and all ends by my adding one more slight ghost to the shadowy realm of fatal precocity! These are the rubs that make us feel the vanity of life—the littleness of man. Yet I do not groan, and will not murmur. My punishment is no caprice of tyranny. I brought it on myself, as greater men have done before. Prometheus is a lesson how to bear torture; but I think my case is most like Nebuchadnezzar's.

But this is dull. I know not how it is; but as is the custom to observe, when something is about to be said particularly flat, I have "a shrewd suspicion," that our light tale is growing tragical. When men have been twice rejected, their feelings are somewhat

strange; and when men feel keenly, they act violently. I have half a mind to give it up, and leave these two volumes in imperfect beauty, like two lone columns on an Argive plain.

Perhaps it is the hour,—perhaps the place; but I am gloomy. The moon is in her midnight bower, and from the walls of the huge hall in which I sit, many a marble chief and canvass cardinal frown, as it were, upon the intrusive stranger, who sits scribbling in their presence, and whom, if they were alive, they would no more think of stabbing, poisoning, or burning, than of eating flesh in Lent. A moan is heard, too, in the lengthening galleries, and doors slam in chambers which none e'er enter. There is nothing so vast and desolate as an Italian palace.

I am a great votary of the genius loci! it is a doctrine I have often proved. Now, if I were seated in some Albanian chambers, all varnished mahogany, and crimson damask, round tables, and square couches, with dwarf

bookcases, which hold not too many volumes, and ever and anon crowned with a bronze or bust, some slight antique, which just reminds us, that had we lived at Athens or at Rome, we are of the select few who would have joined Aspasian coteries and Horatian suppers,—or, if even I had taken refuge in a temporary apartment in dingy Jermyn Street, or sly St. James's Palace, some little room, small, snug, and smoky, cozy, neat, and warm, and *very comfortable*,—why then, affairs would alter. I'd snuff my candles, and I'd poke my fire, and with a pen brisk as the morn, glance off a chapter which might make some people stare; for even the critics, never much my friends, confess I have shown a considerable turn for satire.

But after one-and-twenty, men grow mild—at least, I did. And so this rare gift gets thrown by with cricket, boxing, fencing, foils, and fives,—all pursuits, excellence in which, as in satire, depends on hitting hard. So a little calm gaiety is all I now allow myself, and after

that, I am ever doubly serious, as thrifty housewives occasionally indulge in a slight debauch, and tax the ensuing week the butcher's bill.

I said the critics were never much my friends, which I regret, and which has occasioned me many a heartache. Because we all know, that they are always right, and never make a miss. So, their approbation is a feather in an author's cap, and infinitely to be preferred to public sympathy and private praise.

I don't know how it was, but certainly I did not hit the fancy of these gentry. I suppose I tried to mount the throne without the permission of the Prætorians. In the literary as in all other worlds, the way to rise is to be patronized. "Talent" is admired; but then it must be docile, and deter. In spite of my many faults, the cant of the clique was wanting, and the freemasons discovered I was not a brother. I am sure I had no wish, and no intention, to mingle in their ranks. I dressed some crude inventions in a thoughtless style, without any

idea my page would live beyond the week that gave it birth. I was brought up in due abhorrence of this unthrifty life, and was kept from ink as some boys are kept from wine, or from what grave Signors think even worse.

There also was a rumour ripe and deep, that I had ventured to doubt the inspiration of some exalted bards, whose seats upon Parnassus were so high, that I suppose they were covered with the clouds, for I had never yet detected their divinityships. But nevertheless it was voted, *nem. con.*, that innocent I must be the blaspheming rogue, and so all Grub Street sent its toothless mastiffs at my heretic feet. There is nothing so virulent as an irritated dunce, particularly if he be on a wrong scent. In short, I was voted quite a dangerous character — one of those who would not cry εὕρηκα o'er a genius not yet found, or fall into ecstasies at the originality of an echo.

I understand that it was settled that I should be written down. I wonder why these kind

gentlemen did not succeed. I am sure I did every thing I could to help them. Sometimes I was very fine, and sometimes much too witty. Then, I have seen even purer English than my earliest page; but perhaps my foreign slip-slop made up for that, which indicated the travelled man.

But the public backed me, as we back the weaker party in a boisterous row. The public will sometimes read the book they ought not. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true." But this blundering brings gall to the critic's lip, and many a bilious "article" flows from a pen which itself has failed where the stigmatized has succeeded. When I begin again, I shall know better. I am not one of those minds on which experience is thrown away. I will get a magazine or so to say something for me sweet and soft. Who knows then what I may not come to? Perhaps some congenial editor may some day hail me as "a talented young man!" Perhaps, in the long perspective of my glory, I

may even in time be reckoned a supernumerary of the "two thousand most distinguished writers of the day." And, after all, it is amusing to find even my boyish nonsense, the flagrant defects of which could only be excused by the speedy oblivion which awaited them, upon the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe. I have had my back, too, patted on the Seine, and shrugged my shoulders over indiscretions which had travelled even as far as where the mountains shoot the turbid Arno from their dark green womb.

If I might be permitted to give an opinion, which I never do, I should say that bluster was scarcely the right way to stifle youth. A sneer is the most active hostility that I should recommend under such circumstance; but the best would be silence. As we advance, quiet is the τὸ καλὸν of existence; but when we are juvenals, and think the world a great matter, and ourselves not altogether the most insignificant part of it, we are but too ready to put on

the gloves, and young blood is not exactly the fluid to be bullied. I am sure that my first literary offence would have been my last, if I had not been dared; but when scribbling became a point of honour, I set-to, and would not prove a craven.

The public backed me: I am very willing to ascribe their support merely to their good-nature, for I have found mankind far more amiable than once, misled by books, I dared to hope. But lest this cause alone should be considered a slur upon their discrimination, I will believe, that some few sparks of feeling rose from my false inventions, some slight flame of truth broke out from my dark crudities, and won their sympathy.

In this artificial world, we pine for nature, and we sigh for truth. It is this that makes us hasten to fictitious worlds to find what in our own should be, and yet is not. It is this that makes us prize the page that makes us feel. It is this that bows us down before the

magic of creative mind, whose inspiration is but the voice of disabused humanity. He who, while he shares the passions of his race, yet muses deeply on their deep results, and searching into his own breast, can transform experience into existence, and create past passions into present life—he who can do all this without the cynic's sneer or sophist's gloss, is a rare being;—but where is he?

Since the Thunderer sank to night in Missolonghi's fatal marsh, the intellectual throne has remained vacant. His chiefs and rivals will neither claim, nor yield, the proud preeminence. Each feels that supremacy must be the meed of novel conquests; and it is too late for that. Some, like Napoleon's marshals, have grown fat and rich; some, which is much worse, lean and grey. So, these heroes divide the provinces, and repose under their laurels, that is to say, they amuse themselves with some slight deeds, which, by their contrast, keep alive the memory of their great achieve-

ments. One founds a school; another writes a school-book." Having enchanted the fathers, they condescend to conjure before the children.

Moore alone, like Murat charging in the hottest fight, still maintains the war. Oh! long may victory poise on his unsullied plume! —long may the trenchant sabre of his wit gleam in our ranks, and long his trumpet sound to triumph! Methinks that whenever he may leave us—on that day, the sun will be less warm, the stars less bright, the moon less soft: —that a cloud will burst over the gardens of Cashmere, and the Peris grow pale in the palaces of Amrabad;—that every nightingale will pine, and every rose will fade!

But while the Paladins surround the throne with their broad shields, and in oligarchical disdain support the literary regency, a far different scene opens without the pale. There I view a vast, tumultuous crowd, mad with the lust of praise, and fierce with the ungorged

appetite of insatiable vanity. Fired with the glory that the great captains have won in long campaigns, and flushed with the prospect of the distant crown, bands rush to fight, and, as they hope, to conquer. How wide the combat! How innumerable the combatants! What infinite rashness! What unprecedented self-confidence! What vast variety of manœuvres! What complicated tactics! What bootless and yet unceasing stratagems! What deceitful exultation! What idle boasting! What false triumph! What struggling, what panting, what cursing, and what a dust!

But when that dust subsides, as ever and anon a calm will hang o'er battle; what see we then? The throne still empty, and the guard unbroke; and the plain strewn only with the exhausted bodies and brittle armour of the hot but weak assailants. Then the game begins again. A fresh hero darts on the field, amid the hired cheers of hollow tribes; but ere their leader throws his boastful lance, he turns

a craven. Each moment has its miracle, that proves a cheat; each hour, its fresh prophet, that predicts the past.

I say nothing, because I am no judge; but I will say this, that *all* cannot be the right man. The minds of men are, on the whole, very similar, and genius is, whatever some may think, a very rare production. When I watch this scene of ineffectual strife, and mark them chasing shadows, in spite of all their high fantastic tricks, their elaborate caprice, their affected novelty, their disguised and salted staleness, their stolen beauty and their studied grace, first as I would be to hail a master-sprite, I see nothing but the Protean forms of multiplied mediocrity. They are too many. As in the last days of the fated city, each alley has its prophet. All I hope is, that before I eat a kabob in Persia, they will have discovered the true leader; and that when I return, if I do return, I may find a good literary creed, strong, vehement, and infallible.

I wash my hands of any participations in this contest. What I am, I know not, nor do I care. I have that within me, which man can neither give nor take away, which can throw light on the darkest passages of life, and draw, from a discordant world, a melody divine. For it I would live, and for it alone. Oh! my soul, must we then part! Is this the end of all our conceptions, all our musings, our panting thoughts, our gay fancies, our bright imaginings, our delicious reveries, and exquisite communing? Is this the end, the great and full result, of all our sweet society? I care not for myself; I am a wretch beneath even pity. My thousand errors, my ten thousand follies, my infinite corruption, have well deserved a bitterer fate than this. But thou!—— I feel I have betrayed thee. Hadst thou been the inmate of more spiritual clay, bound with a brain less headstrong, and with blood less hot, thou mightest have been glorious. I care not for myself, but thou—the

bright friend that ne'er was wanting, that in my adversity hast softened sorrow, and in my days of joy have tripled rapture, who hast made obscurity an empire, and common life a pageant—thou, Haram of my life, to whose inviolable shrine I fled in all my griefs, and found a succour, must we then part indeed, my delicate Ariel! and must thou quit this earth without a record! Oh! mistress, that I have ever loved! — oh! idol, that I have ever worshipped! how like a fond wife, who clings even closer when we wrong her most, how faithful art thou, even in this hour of need, and how consoling is thy whispering voice!

Where are we? I think I was saying, that 'tis difficult to form an opinion of ourselves. They say it is impossible; which sounds like sense, and probably is truth. And yet, I sometimes think I write a pretty style, though spoiled by that confounded puppyism; but, then, mine is the puppy age, and that will wear off. Then, too, there are my vanity, my conceit, my

affectation, my arrogance, and my egotism; all very heinous, and painfully contrasting with the imperturbable propriety of my fellow-scribblers, — "All gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones." But I may mend, or they fall off, and then the odds will be more equal.

Thank Heavens! I am emancipated. It was a hard struggle, and cost me dear. Born in the most artificial country of this most artificial age, was it wonderful that I imbibed its false views, and shared its fatal passions? But I rode out the storm, and found a port, although a wreck. I look back with disgust upon myself, — on them, with pity. A qualm comes over me when, for a moment, I call to mind their little jealousies and their minute hatreds, their wretched plans, and miserable purposes; their envy, their ignorance, and their malice; their strife, their slander, their struggles, their false excitement, and their fictitious rapture; their short-sighted views, and long delusions.

Is it not wisdom, then, to fly from all this hot anxiety and wearing care, and to forget these petty griefs, and pettier joys, by the soft waters of this southern sea? Here I find all that I long have thirsted for. Here, my soul throws off the false ideas of vulgar life, and recurs to its own nature. Here, each beam is rapture, and each breeze is bliss. Here, my days are reveries, and my nights are dreams. Here, each warm morn, I muse o'er exquisite creation; and, when the twilight blushes in the west, I hear a whispering sound that Nature sends, which tells me secrets man cannot invent. Oh! why cannot life be passed in perpetual thought, and in the excitement of beautiful ideas!

And here, as far as converse is concerned, I now could live without mankind; but I should miss their exquisite arts, which render existence more intense. Ah! that my earliest youth had wandered here! Ah! that my fathers ne'er had left their shores! I check the thought, for

while I muse, my memory wanders to another region, and too well I feel that, even amid the blue Ægean isles, my thoughts will fly to a remoter land and colder sea.

Oh, England! — Oh! my country — not in hate I left thee — not in bitterness am I wandering here. My heart is thine, although my shadow falls upon a foreign strand; and although full many an Eastern clime and Southern race have given me something of their burning blood, it flows for thee! I rejoice that my flying fathers threw their ancient seed on the stern shores which they have not dishonoured: — I am proud to be thy child. Thy noble laws have fed with freedom a soul that ill can brook constraint. Among thy hallowed hearths, I own most beautiful affections. In thy abounding tongue, my thoughts find music; and with the haughty fortunes of thy realm, my destiny would mingle!

What! though the immortal glory, which here shoots forth from out the tombs of em-

pires, bathes with no lambent gleams thy immemorial cliffs! Still there we proudly witness the more active sublimity of great and growing empire. What Rome and Carthage were, thou art, conjoined, my country! In each eternal zone, there floats the sovereign standard of St. George, and each vast deep groans with the haughty bulwarks of the globe. Earth has none like unto thee, thou Queen of universal waters! Europe watches thy nod. The painted Indian vails his feathery crown to thee. Thee sultry Afric fears; and dusky Asia is thy teeming dower!

What! though no purple skies, no golden suns, gild in thy land the olive and the vine—yet beauty lingers in thy quiet vales, and health still wanders on thy peaceful plains, rich with no human gore. Nature has given thee much; and all that she has denied, is the quick tribute of the hastening climes. Free are thy sons, and high their rising hearts, that pant for power; and whom in the harams of the glowing earth,

whither I bend my fated steps, shall I find to match the dazzling daughters of my native land?

Alas! that hot anxiety should spoil the noblest nation that ever rose to empire! Oh! my countrymen, think—think ere it is too late, that life is love, and love is Heaven. Feel—feel, that wealth is but a means, and power an instrument. Away, then, with the short-sighted views of harsh utility! Our hours are few,—they might be beautiful. Our life is brief,—but pleasure lengthens days. Man is made for absolute enjoyment. "It is thy vocation, Hal!" and they may preach, and groan, growl, and hiss, but for this we live, and, sooner or later, to this we shall recur. The new philosophy that is at hand, is but an appeal to our five senses. I may not live to hear its gay decrees, nor may my son; but I feel confident the Golden Age is not far off. The world is round,—so is eternity, and so is time. The Iron Age must cease, although by polish

we have contrived to make it steel. Man can bear it no longer,—and then King Saturn will hold his court again. We have had enough of bloody Jupiter. And so, farewell, my country! Few can love thee better than he who traces here these idle lines. Worthier heads are working for thy glory and thy good; but if ever the hour shall call, my brain and life are thine.

Meantime, I cast my fortunes on the waters. Let them waft me where they wist. Where'er my fate may urge me, I can view the world with a deep passion, that can extract a moral from the strange, and draw from loneliness delight.

My gentle reader!—gentle you have been to me, and ever kind—broad seas, and broader lands, divide us. We no longer meet. Take, then, these pages as a morning call. Methinks, even as I write, my faithful steed stops at thy cherished door. Once more, thy smoky knocker soils my rosy glove; once more, thy portal

opens, and the geranium gale heralds the sweetness of thy chambers. We meet, and while you net a purse, or some small work, which exercises, at the same time, the body and the mind, you are also excessively amusing. How amiable is your scandal! How piquant your morality! Aurelia is about to be married, but she herself is not sure to which brother: she is so good-natured! And Brilliant says, that Louisa's eyebrows fell off in the agitation of a new dance,—but he is not to be believed: he is so ill-natured! And thus glides on an hour in easy chat, until a pealing knock drives me away—a nervous man who shuns a strange incursion. We part with the hope, that the Park or the Opera may again bring together, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, the two most amusing people in town.

Dreams! dreams! Oh! why from out the misty caves of Memory, call I these visions to the light of life? And yet there is a charm in just remembering we have been charmed. There

is something soft and soothing in the reminiscence of a lounging hour. But, hark! The convent bell sends forth a matin peal. I hear the wakening of an early bird,—I feel the freshness of the growing morn. I have exceeded all bounds, and shall get reported, for I have a spy in my establishment. That I have long discovered. I think it must be my valet; but he vows it is the cook, who again protests——but I'll unearth the traitor, and put him on board wages for his pains. In the mean time, I must prepare for a rowing letter by return of post.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE Duke threw himself into his carriage in that mood which fits us for desperate deeds. What he intended to do, indeed, was doubtful, but something very vigorous, very decided, perhaps very terrible. An indefinite great effort danced, in misty magnificence, before the vision of his mind. His whole being was to be changed — his life was to be revolutionized. Such an alteration was to take place, that even she could not doubt the immense yet incredible result. Then Despair whispered its cold-blooded taunts, and her last hopeless words echoed in his ear. But he was too agitated to be calmly miserable, and, in the poignancy of his feelings,

he even meditated death. One thing, however, he could obtain,—one instant relief was yet in his power —— solitude. He panted for the loneliness of his own chamber, broken only by his agitated musings.

The carriage stopped; the lights and noise called him to life. This, surely, could not be home? Whirled open the door, down dashed the steps, with all that prompt precision which denotes the practised hand of an aristocratic retainer.

"What is all this, Symmons? Why did you not drive home?"

"Your Grace forgets, that Mr. Annesley and some gentlemen sup with your Grace to-night at the Alhambra."

"Impossible! Drive home."

"Your Grace perhaps forgets, that your Grace is expected?" said the experienced servant, who knew when to urge a master, who, to-morrow, might blame him for permitting his caprice.

"What am I to do? Stay here. I will run up-stairs and put them off."

He ran up into the crush room. The Opera was just over, and some parties, who were not staying the ballet, had already assembled there. As he passed along, he was stopped by Lady Fitz-pompey, who would not let such a capital opportunity escape of exhibiting Caroline and the young Duke together.

"Bulkley," said her Ladyship, "there must be something wrong about the carriage." An experienced, middle-aged gentleman, who jobbed on in society, by being always ready, and knowing his cue, resigned the arm of Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and disappeared.

"George," said Lady Fitz-pompey, "give your arm to Carry, just for one moment."

If it had been any body but his cousin, the Duke would have easily escaped; but Caroline he invariably treated with marked regard; perhaps because his conscience occasionally reproached him, that he had not treated her

with a stronger feeling. At this moment, too, she was the only being in the world, save one, whom he could remember with satisfaction: he felt that he loved her most affectionately, but somehow she did not inspire him with those peculiar feelings which thrilled his heart at the recollection of May Dacre.

In this mood, he offered an arm, which was accepted; but he could not in a moment assume the tone of mind befitting his situation and the scene. He was silent; for him a remarkable circumstance.

"Do not stay here," said Lady Caroline in a soft voice, which her mother could not overhear. "I know you want to be away. Steal off."

"Where can I be better than with you, Carry?" said the young Duke, determined not to leave her, and loving her still more for her modest kindness; and thereon he turned round, and to show that he was sincere, began talking with his usual spirit. Mr. Bulkley of course never returned, and Lady Fitz-pompey felt as

satisfied with her diplomatic talents, as a plenipotentiary who has just arranged an advantageous treaty.

Arundel Dacre came up, and spoke to Lady Fitz-pompey. Never did two persons converse together who were more dissimilar in their manner and their feelings; and yet Arundel Dacre did contrive to talk,—a result which he could not always accomplish, even with those who could sympathize with him. Lady Fitz-pompey listened to him with attention; for Arundel Dacre, in spite of his odd manner, or perhaps in some degree in consequence of it, had obtained a distinguished reputation both among men and women; and it was the great principle of Lady Fitz-pompey to attach to her the distinguished youth of both sexes. She was pleased with this public homage of Arundel Dacre; because he was one who, with the reputation of talents, family, and fashion, seldom spoke to any one, and his attentions elevated their object. Thus she maintained her empire.

St. Maurice now came up to excuse himself to the young Duke, for not attending at the Alhambra to-night. "Sophy could not bear it," he whispered; "she had got her head full of the most ridiculous fancies, and it was in vain to speak: so he had promised to give up that, as well as Crockford's."

This reminded our hero of his party, and the purpose of his entering the Opera. He determined not to leave Caroline till her carriage was called; and he began to think that he really must go to the Alhambra, after all. He resolved to send them off at an early hour.

"Any thing new to-night, Henry?" asked his Grace of Lord St. Maurice. "I have just come in."

"Oh! then you have seen them?"

"Seen whom?"

"The most knowing *forestieri* we ever had. We have been speaking of nothing else the whole evening. Has not Caroline told you? Arundel Dacre introduced me to them."

"Who are they?"

"I forget their names.—Dacre, how do you call the heroes of the night? Dacre never answers. Did you ever observe that? But, see! there they come."

The Duke turned, and observed Lord Darrell advancing with two gentlemen, with whom his Grace was well acquainted. These were Prince Charles de Whiskerburg and Count Frill.

None of your paltry ****** princes, none of your scampy ****** counts, but nobles such as Hungary and Britain can alone produce. M. de Whiskerburg was the eldest son of a prince, who, besides being the premier noble of the empire, possessed, in his own country, a very pretty park of two or three hundred miles in circumference, in the boundaries of which the imperial mandate was not current, but hid its diminished head before the supremacy of a subject worshipped under the title of John the Twenty-fourth. M. de Whiskerburg was a very young man, very tall, with a very fine figure, and very fine features. In short, a sort of Hungarian

Apollo; only his beard, his mustachios, his whiskers, his *favoris*, his padishas, his sultanas, his mignonettas, his dulcibellas, did not certainly entitle him to the epithet of *imberbis*, and made him rather an after-representative of the Hungarian Hercules.

Count Frill was a very different sort of personage. He was all rings and ringlets, ruffles, and a little rouge. Much older than his companion, short in stature, plump in figure, but with a most defined waist, fair, blooming, with a multiplicity of long light curls, and a perpetual smile playing upon his round countenance, he looked like the Cupid of an Opera Olympus.

The Duke of St. James had been very intimate with these distinguished gentlemen in their own country, and had received from them many and most distinguished attentions. Often had he expressed to them his sincere desire to greet them in his native land. Their mutual anxiety, of never again meeting, was now removed. If his heart, instead of being bruised,

was absolutely broken, still honour, conscience, the glory of his House, his individual reputation, alike urged him not to be cold or backward at such a moment. He advanced, therefore, with a due mixture of grace and warmth, and congratulated them on their arrival. At this moment, Lady Fitz-pompey's carriage was announced. Promising to return to them in an instant, he hastened to his cousin; but Mr. Arundel Dacre had already offered his arm which, for Arundel Dacre, was really pretty well.

The Duke was now glad that he had a small re-union this evening, as he could at once pay a courtesy to his foreign friends. He ran into the Signora's dressing-room, to assure her of his presence. He stumbled upon Peacock Piggott as he came out, and summoned him to fill the vacant place of St. Maurice, and then sent him with a message to some ladies who yet lingered in their box, and whose presence, he thought, might be an agreeable addition to the party.

You entered the Alhambra by a Saracenic cloister, from the ceiling of which an occasional lamp threw a gleam upon some Eastern arms hung up against the wall. This passage led to the Armoury, a room of moderate dimensions, but hung with rich contents. Many an inlaid breastplate, — many a Mameluke scimitar and Damascus blade, — many a gemmed pistol and pearl-embroidered saddle, might there be seen, though viewed in a subdued and quiet light. All seemed hushed, and still, and shrouded in what had the reputation of being a palace of pleasure.

In this chamber assembled the expected guests. His Grace and the Bird of Paradise arrived first, with their foreign friends. Lord Squib, and Lord Darrell, Sir Lucius Grafton, Mr. Annesley, and Mr. Peacock Piggott, followed, but not alone. There were two ladies who, by courtesy, if by no other right, bore the titles of Lady Squib and Mrs. Annesley. There was also a pseudo Lady Aphrodite Grafton. There was Mrs. Montfort, the famous

blonde, of a beauty which was quite ravishing, and dignified as beautiful. Some said (but really people say such things) that there was a talk (I never believe anything I hear), that had not the Bird of Paradise flown in, (these foreigners pick up every thing,) Mrs. Montfort would have been the Duchess of St. James. How this may be, I know not: certain, however, this superb and stately Donna did not openly evince any spleen at her more fortunate rival. Probably, although she found herself a guest at the Alhambra, instead of being the mistress of the palace: probably, like many other ladies, she looked upon this affair of the singing bird as a freak which must end — and then, perhaps, his Grace, who was a charming young man, would return to his senses. There, also, was her sister, a long, fair girl, who looked sentimental, but was only silly. There was a little French actress, like a highly finished miniature; and a Spanish *danseuse*, tall, dusky, and lithe, glancing like a lynx, and graceful as a jennet.

Having all arrived, they proceeded down a

small gallery to the banqueting-room. The doors are thrown open. Pardon me, if for a moment I do not describe the chamber; but really the blaze affects my sight. The room was large and lofty. It was fitted up as an Eastern tent. The walls were hung with scarlet cloth, tied up with ropes of gold. Round the room, crouched recumbent lions richly gilt, who grasped in their paw a lance, the top of which was a coloured lamp. The ceiling was emblazoned with the Hauteville arms, and was radiant with burnished gold. A cresset lamp was suspended from the centre of the shield, and not only emitted an equable flow of soft though brilliant light, but also, as the aromatic oil wasted away, distilled an exquisite perfume.

The table blazed with golden plate, for the Bird of Paradise loved splendour. At the end of the room, under a canopy and upon a throne, the shield and vases lately executed for his Grace now appeared. Every thing was

gorgeous, costly, and imposing; but there was no pretence, save in the original outline, at maintaining the Oriental character. The furniture was French; and opposite the throne, Canova's Hebe, by Bertolini, bounded with a golden cup from a pedestal of *or molu*.

The guests are seated; but after a few minutes, the servants withdraw. Small tables of ebony and silver, and dumb waiters of ivory and gold, conveniently stored, are at hand, and Spiridion never leaves the room. The repast was most refined, most exquisite, and most various. It was one of those meetings where all eat. When a few persons, easy and unconstrained, unincumbered with cares, and of dispositions addicted to enjoyment, get together at past midnight, it is extraordinary what an appetite they evince. Singers also are proverbially prone to gourmandize; and though the Bird of Paradise unfortunately possessed the smallest mouth in all Singingland, it is astonishing how she pecked! But they talked as well as feasted,

and were really gay. It was amusing to observe,—that is to say, if you had been a dumb waiter, and had time for observation,—how characteristic was the affectation of the women. Lady Squib was witty, Mrs. Annesley refined, and the pseudo Lady Afy fashionable. As for Mrs. Montfort, she was, as her wont, somewhat silent, but excessively sublime. The Spaniard said nothing, but no doubt indicated the possession of Cervantic humour by the sly calmness with which she exhausted her own waiter, and pillaged her neighbours. The little Frenchwoman scarcely ate any thing, but drank champaigne and chatted, with equal rapidity and equal composure.

"Prince," said the Duke, "I hope Madame de Harestein approves of your trip to England?"

The Prince only smiled, for he was of a silent disposition, and therefore wonderfully well suited his travelling companion.

"Poor Madame de Harestein!" exclaimed

Count Frill. "What despair she was in, when you left Vienna, my dear Duke. Ah! *mon Dieu!* I did what I could to amuse her. I used to take my guitar, and sing to her morning and night, but without the least effect. She certainly would have died of a broken heart, if it had not been for the dancing-dogs."

"The dancing-dogs!" minced the pseudo Lady Aphrodite. "How shocking!"

"Did they bite her?" asked Lady Squib, "and so inoculate her with gaiety."

"Oh! the dancing-dogs, my dear ladies! everybody was mad about the dancing-dogs. They came from Peru, and danced the mazurka in green jackets with a *jabot*. Oh! what a *jabot*!"

"I dislike animals excessively," remarked Mrs. Annesley.

"Dislike the dancing dogs!" said Count Frill. "Ah! my good lady, you would have been enchanted. Even the Kaiser fed them with

pistachio nuts. Oh! so pretty! Delicate leetle things, soft shining little legs, and pretty little faces! so sensible, and with such *jabots!*"

"I assure you, they were excessively amusing," said the Prince in a soft confidential, under-tone to his neighbour, Mrs. Montfort, who admiring his silence, which she took for state, smiled and bowed with fascinating condescension.

"And what else has happened very remarkable, Count, since I left you?" asked Lord Darrell.

"Nothing, nothing, my dear Darrell. This *bêtise* of a war has made us all serious. If old Clamstandt had not married that gipsy little Dugiria, I really think I should have taken a turn to Belgrade."

"You should not eat so much, Poppet!" drawled Charles Annesley to the Spaniard.

"Why not?" said the little French lady with great animation, always ready to fight any body's battle, provided she could get an opportunity to talk. "Why not, Mr. Annesley?

You never will let any body eat—I never eat myself, because every night, having to talk so much, I am dry, dry, dry,—so I drink, drink, drink. It is an extraordinary thing, that there is no language which makes you so thirsty as French. I always have heard that all the Southern languages, Spanish and Italian, make you hungry."

"What can be the reason?" seriously asked the pseudo Lady Afy.

"Because there is so much salt in it," said Lord Squib.

"Delia," drawled Mr. Annesley, "you look very pretty to-night!"

"I am charmed to charm you, Mr. Annesley. Shall I tell you what Lord Bon Mot said of you?"

"No, *ma mignonne!* I never wish to hear my own good things."

"*Spoiled*, you should add," said Lady Squib, "if Bon Mot be in the case."

"Lord Bon Mot is a most gentlemanly man,"

said Delia, indignant at an admirer being attacked. "He always wants to be amusing. Whenever he dines out, he comes and sits with me for half an hour to catch the air of the Parisian badinage."

"And you tell him a variety of little things?" asked Lord Squib, insidiously drawing out the secret tactics of Bon Mot.

"*Beaucoup, beaucoup,*" said Delia, extending two little white hands sparkling with gems. "If he come in ever so—how do you call it? heavy—Not that—in the domps—Ah! it is that—If ever he come in the domps, he goes out always like a *soufflée.*"

"As empty, I have no doubt," said Lady Squib.

"And as sweet, I have no doubt," said Lord Squib; "for Delcroix complains sadly of your excesses, Delia."

"Mr. Delcroix complain of me! That, indeed, is too bad. Just because I recommend Montmorency de Versailles to him for an

excellent customer, ever since he abuses me, merely because Montmorency has forgot, in the hurry of going off, to pay his little account."

"But he says, you have got all the things," said Lord Squib, whose great amusement was to put Delia in a passion.

"What of that?" screamed the little lady. "Montmorency gave them me."

"Don't make such a noise," said the Bird of Paradise. "I never can eat when there is a noise. St. James," continued she in a fretful tone, "they make such a noise!"

"Annesley, keep Squib quiet."

"Delia, leave that young man alone. If Isidora would talk a little more, and you eat a little more, I think you would be the most agreeable little ladies I know. Poppet! put those *bonbons* in your pocket. You should never eat sugar plums in company."

Thus talking agreeable nonsense, tasting agreeable dishes, and sipping agreeable wines,

an hour ran on. Sweetest music from an unseen source ever and anon sounded, and Spiridion swung a censer full of perfumes 'round the chamber. (2.) At length the Duke requested Count Frill to give them a song. The Bird of Paradise would never sing for pleasure, only for fame and a slight cheque. The Count begged to decline, and at the same time asked for a guitar. The Signora sent for hers; and his Excellency preluding with a beautiful simper, gave them some slight thing to this effect:

I.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a gay little girl is charming Bignetta!
She dances, she prattles,
She rides and she rattles;
But she always is charming——that charming Bignetta!

II.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wild little witch is charming Bignetta!
When she smiles, I 'm all madness;
When she frowns, I 'm all sadness;
But she always is smiling——that charming Bignetta!

III.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wicked young rogue is charming Bignetta!
She laughs at my shyness,
And flirts with his Highness;
Yet still she is charming——that charming Bignetta!

IV.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a dear little girl is charming Bignetta!
"Think me only a sister,"
Said she trembling: I kissed her.
What a charming young sister is——charming Bignetta!

He ceased; and although

"—— The Ferrarese
To choicer music chimed his gay guitar
In Este's Halls,"

as Casti himself, or rather Mr. Rose, choicely sings, yet still his song served its purpose, for it raised a smile.

"I wrote that for Madame Sapiepha, at the Congress of Verona," said Count Frill. "It has been thought amusing."

"Madame Sapiepha?" exclaimed the Bird of Paradise. "What! that pretty little woman, who has such pretty caps?"

"The same! Ah! what caps! *Mon Dieu!* what taste! what taste!"

"You like caps, then?" asked the Bird of Paradise with a sparkling eye.

"Oh! if there be anything more than other, that I know most, it is the cap. Here, *voici!*" said he, rather oddly unbuttoning his waistcoat, "you see what lace I have got. *Voici! voici!*"

"Ah! me! what lace! what lace! what lace!" exclaimed the Bird, in rapture. "St. James, look at his lace: Come here, come here, sit next me. Let me look at that lace." She examined it with great attention, then turned up her beautiful eyes with a fascinating smile "*Ah! c'est jolie, n'est-ce pas?* But you like caps. I tell you what, you shall see my caps. Spiridion, go, *mon cher*, and tell Ma'amselle to bring my caps—all my caps—one of each set."

In due time entered the Swiss, with the caps—all the caps—one of each set. As she handed them in turn to her mistress, the Bird chirped a panegyric upon each.

"That is pretty, is it not—and this also? but this is my favourite. What do you think of this border? *c'est belle, cette garniture? et ce jabot, c'est très seduisant, n'est-ce pas? Mais voici*, the cap of Princess Lichtenstein. *C'est superb, c'est mon favori.* But I also love very much this of the Duchess de Berri. She gave me the pattern herself. And, after all, this *cornette à petite santé* of Lady Blaze is a dear little thing; then, again, this *coiffe à dentelle* of Lady Macaroni is quite a pet."

"Pass them down," said Lord Squib; "we want to look at them." Accordingly they were passed down. Lord Squib put one on.

"Do I look superb, sentimental, or only pretty?" asked his Lordship. The example was contagious, and most of the caps were appropriated. No one laughed more than their

mistress, who, not having the slightest idea of the value of money, would have given them all away on the spot; not from any good-natured feeling, but from the remembrance that to-morrow she might amuse half an hour in buying others.

Whilst some were stealing, and she remonstrating, the Duke clapped his hands like a Caliph. The curtain at the end of the apartment was immediately withdrawn, and the ball-room stood revealed.

It was of the same size as the banqueting-hall. Its walls exhibited a long perspective of gilt pilasters, the frequent piers of which were entirely of plate looking-glass, save where, occasionally, a picture had been, as it were, inlaid in its rich frame. Here was the Titian Venus of the Tribune, deliciously copied by a French artist: there, the Roman Fornarina, with her delicate grace, beamed like the personification of Raffaelle's genius. Here, Zuleikha, living in the light and shade of that magician Guercino

in vain summoned the passions of the blooming Hebrew: and there, Cleopatra, preparing for her last, immortal hour, proved by what we saw that Guido had been a lover.

The ceiling of this apartment was richly painted, and richly gilt: from it were suspended three lustres by golden cords, which threw a softened light upon the floor of polished and curiously inlaid woods. At the end of the apartment was an orchestra, and here the pages, under the direction of Carlstein, offered a very efficient domestic band.

Round the room, waltzed the elegant revellers. Softly and slowly, led by their host, they glided along like spirits of air; but each time that the Duke passed the musicians, the music became livelier, and the motion more brisk, till at length you might have mistaken them for a college of spinning dervishes. One by one, an exhausted couple slunk away. Some threw themselves on a sofa, some monopolized an easy chair; but in twenty minutes all the

dancers had disappeared. At length, Peacock Piggott gave a groan, which denoted returning energy, and raised a stretching leg in air, bringing up, though most unwittingly, upon his foot, one of the Bird's sublime and beautiful caps.

"Halloa! Piggott, armed *cap au pied*, I see," said Lord Squib. This joke was a signal for general resuscitation.

The Alhambra formed a quadrangle: all the chambers were on the basement story. In the middle of the court of the quadrangle was a most beautiful fountain; and the court was formed by a conservatory, which was built along each side of the interior square, and served, like a cloister or covered way, for a communication between the different parts of the building. To this conservatory they now repaired. It was very broad, full of the rarest and most delicious plants and flowers, and brilliantly illuminated. Busts and statues were intermingled with the fairy grove; and a rich, warm hue, by the skil-

ful arrangement of a coloured lamp, was thrown over many a nymph and fair divinity, —many a blooming hero and beardless god. Here they lounged in different parties, talking on such subjects as idlers ever fall upon; now and then plucking a flower, — now and then listening to the fountain, — now and then lingering over the distant music, — and now and then strolling through a small apartment which opened to their walks, and which bore the title of the Temple of Gnidus. Here, Canova's Venus breathed an atmosphere of perfume and of light —that wonderful statue, whose full-charged eye is not very classical, to be sure — but, then, how true!

While thus they were whiling away their time, Lord Squib proposed a visit to the Theatre, which he had ordered to be lit up. To the Theatre they repaired. They rambled over every part of the house, amused themselves, to the horror of Mr. Annesley, with a visit to the Gallery, and then collected behind the scenes.

They were excessively amused with the properties; and Lord Squib proposed they should dress themselves. Enough champaigne had been quaffed to render any proposition palatable, and, in a few minutes, they were all in costume. A crowd of queers and chambermaids, Jews and chimney-sweeps, lawyers and Charleys, Spanish Dons and Irish officers, rushed upon the stage. The little Spaniard was Almaviva, and fell into magnificent attitudes, with her sword and plume. Lord Squib was the old woman of Brentford,—and very funny. Sir Lucius Grafton, Harlequin; and Dasreli, Grimaldi. The Prince, and the Count, without knowing it, figured as watchmen. Squib whispered Annesley, that Sir Lucius O'Trigger might appear in character, but was prudent enough to suppress the joke.

The band was summoned, and they danced quadrilles with infinite spirit, and finished the night, at the suggestion of Lord Squib, by breakfasting on the stage. By the time this

meal was despatched, the purple light of morn had broke into the building, and the ladies proposed an immediate departure. Mrs. Montfort and her sister were sent home in one of the Duke's carriages; and the foreign guests were requested by him to be their escort. The respective parties drove off. Two cabriolets lingered to the last, and finally carried away the French actress and the Spanish dancer, Lord Darrell, and Peacock Piggott; but whether the two gentlemen went in one, and the two ladies in the other, I cannot aver. I hope not.

There was at length a dead silence, and the young Duke was left to solitude and the Signora!

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

